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the summer

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ancient opera

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of beauty

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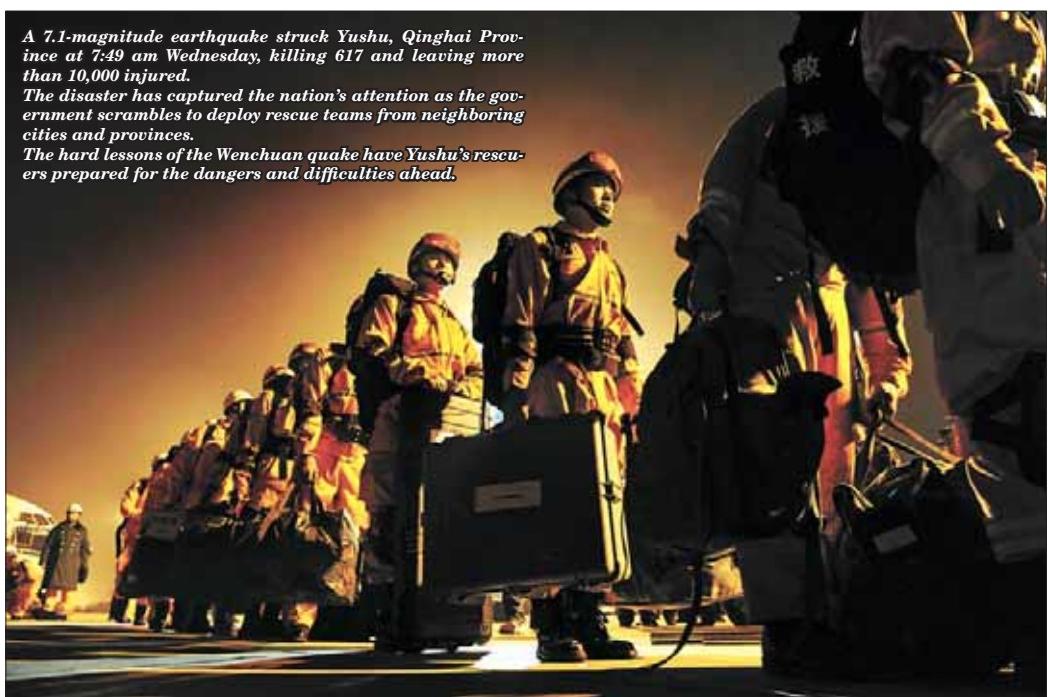
Yushu shaken!

Read more on Page 2.

A 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck Yushu, Qinghai Province at 7:49 am Wednesday, killing 617 and leaving more than 10,000 injured.

The disaster has captured the nation's attention as the government scrambles to deploy rescue teams from neighboring cities and provinces.

The hard lessons of the Wenchuan quake have Yushu's rescuers prepared for the dangers and difficulties ahead.



Rescuers from Henan Province – their equipment and supplies in hand – board a flight bound for the quake zone.

Xinhua Photo

Social site
puts women
in charge

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gentlemen a
rare species

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rats teach
cool science

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films make
you sick?

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NEWLY RENOVATED! SPORTS & MUSIC ARENA



NOW OPEN!
GOOSE & DUCK
ALL GIRLS BAND!

MUST SEE!
HOT POT!



Quake survivors wait in chilly open for relief



Rescuers are racing against time searching for survivors in the rubble.

Xinhua Photos

Survivors of a 7.1-magnitude quake that toppled houses and cut off power and medical aid in Qinghai Province Wednesday have been left waiting with no shelter while rescuers search for the buried, Xinhua News Agency reported.

According to a report by the local quake-relief headquarters, 617 people were dead as of Thursday afternoon. Another 10,000 were injured.

The headquarters sent relief groups to rescue survivors and help detect possible aftershocks. Initial rescue efforts were led by the People's Armed Police and the People's Liberation Army soldiers stationed at Lanzhou Military Region. Civilians helped move debris with their bare hands during the search for survivors.

The quake flattened homes — many of which were made of wood and earth — and other buildings in Jiegu, the epicenter and seat of the Yushu Prefecture's government. As many as 15,000 families throughout the prefecture have been left homeless, according to the report.

Rescuers set up 40 tents for survivors in Jiegu. The area is home to 100,000.

About 1,000 people were left sitting or lying on the ground in darkness outside Yushu's Sports Committee. Survivors bundled themselves in blankets pulled from the debris, Xinhua reported.

The National Meteorological Station forecasted Wednesday that evening temperatures could dip into the negatives with a daytime high of 15 C.

The central government allocated 200 million yuan of its disaster relief fund on the day of



Children rescued the first night are still without shelter.

the quake, the Ministry of Finance said. Relief materials and rescue groups sent by companies, organizations, NGOs, foreign countries, and individual donors are en route to the region.

Air China sent three planes with rescue workers and relief materials to Xining, the provincial capital. China Telecom repaired telephone communication lines in the disaster area to bring mobile and landline phones back online.

Officials warned that aftershocks above magnitude 5.5 are likely to continue, and the China Earthquake Networks Center warned that further aftershocks above magnitude 6 could follow during the next several days.

Gao Jianguo, a researcher at the Institute of Geology, said in an interview with the *Shanghai Morning Post* that the Yushu earthquake was a redirection of the Wenchuan Earthquake. "The two regions are on the same geological fault line, which has suddenly become active. The 7.1 quake means we are entering a new period of activity," he said.

The China Earthquake Administration announced a top-level emergency response for the Qinghai earthquake. Due to the high altitude and continuing aftershocks, local quake-relief headquarters cautioned independent rescue teams from going to the region without permission.

The most needed relief items are tents, food, cotton quilts, coats, medical devices and digging machines. Donors can contact their local quake-relief headquarters or Red Cross Society of China.

(By Liang Meilan)

Policy to woo more overseas investors

By Han Manman

To attract more foreign direct investment, the government altered regulations this week to improve conditions for foreign companies while restricting funding for environmentally unsound projects.

Foreign investment in high-tech industries, services, energy-efficient and environmental protection projects is encouraged especially in the central and western regions, top officials said at a news conference Wednesday.

"China is very competitive in attracting foreign investment," said Zhang Xiaoqiang, vice chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission.

His comments came after foreign direct investment rose 7.7

percent year-on-year to 160 billion yuan in the first quarter, signaling growing confidence in the outlook for the world's third largest economy.

Western media reported that foreign firms felt unwelcome in China, but Zhang said foreign investment in China last year was down 2.6 percent; the world average during that same time saw a 40 percent drop.

"It's a sharp contrast and evidence that China is a sound investment location," he said.

However, Zhang admitted problems exist. "We never said our foreign investment environment is perfect, but many 'problems' are just a consequence of rapid growth," he said.

Under the new regulations, the

country will revise its industry catalogue to open more industries to overseas investment. The government most hopes to attract foreign investment in high-tech industries, service sectors, energy-saving and environmental protection, but will reject or limit projects which are polluting and energy-consuming or in industries running at overcapacity.

Overseas investors are encouraged to increase their investment in central and western regions, particularly in environmentally friendly labor-intensive companies. Such investments will have simplified administrative procedures and favorable tax policies. Foreign-funded companies shifting from the coast to the interior will also be supported.

Multinationals are encouraged to set up regional headquarters, research and development centers, procurement hubs, financial-management and other functional offices in China. Imported items for scientific and technological development by qualified foreign-funded R&D centers will be exempt from tariffs, importing value-added tax and goods and services taxes through the end of the year.

Many foreign companies in Beijing were pleased with the new move.

The American Chamber of Commerce in China said Wednesday that it felt optimistic about the changes.

Christian Murck, the chamber's

president, said he is waiting to hear more details about the regulation, but said it was a positive signal of future relationships.

"We believe the new regulation will be very meaningful for foreign companies' future developments in China," said Zhu Jiming, president of Caterpillar Inc, China, a heavy machinery giant. "The new move will encourage foreign companies to increase their China investment and enlarge the scope of their business," he said.

According to the survey results from management consultancy AT Kearney and the UN Conference on Trade and Development, China remains the most attractive place for overseas investment.

Vehicle exhaust holding back capital's livability

By Li Zhixin

Soaring traffic exhaust may stand in the way of Beijing's low-carbon dreams, the World Resources Institute (WRI) said Tuesday.

"Beijing is on the threshold of being a post-industrial society. Its energy conservation should be focused on the service industry and household energy consumption, but surging urban traffic and non-green construction have become the top carbon emitters," Zou Ji, chief representative of WRI, said at the International Meeting on Low-Carbon and Green City sponsored by the British Embassy and the National Development and Reform Committee.

That's not to say emissions in the service industry and household energy consumption is not rising. It is, but exhaust fumes and industrial pollution remain a step ahead.

Water pollution management in the urban area also stands in the way of Beijing's green plans. "The construction of sewage treatment facilities and pipelines lags behind the city's rapid development," said Li Liping, a professor at Renmin University's Institute of Urban and Regional Economics.

"Having a low-carbon economy is an important step in becoming a green city, so all our new developments should be planned in that direction," said Zhao Lei, spokesman for the Municipal Development and Reform Commission.

The municipal government is already working to improve transportation with rapid rail expansion and the addition of new bus lines. "But it also needs to improve its drinking water, start protecting its water sources and renovate the urban sewerage network," Zhao said.

The government is continuing to push polluting companies to the outskirts to better control downtown pollution, Zhao said.

But unlike in the UK and the US, a low-carbon economy is not a major point of economic growth in China, Zou said, adding, "Traditional economic industries can support our economic growth for the next five to 10 years."

The reason, Zou said, lies in the technological gap between China and developed countries. That gap has been narrowing as the country learns from and adapts achievements of the Western industrial revolution.

"However, switching to a low-carbon economy now would be like abandoning decades of progress and starting over," Zou said. "China is obviously not on the same level as the US, the European Union and Japan, which already have powerful technological advantages to sustain a low-carbon economy."

Zou said the shortage of technology for developing renewable and new energies is another challenge. An energy shift could also carry social consequences such as mass layoffs of workers in high-polluting industries that are forced to shut down.

Cramped capsule hotel finds few tenants

By Han Manman

The city's first capsule hotel is still struggling to find a second tenant as of Wednesday.

Each of its eight capsules contains a single bunk and small nightstand sandwiched between two whitewashed, pasteboard walls. The ceiling in each capsule is wire mesh.

The hotel, built within another apartment, is located in Liulangzhuang Village on the Northeast Fourth Ring Road in Haidian District.

Opened last month as a housing experiment by retired engineer Huang Rixin, 78, the hotel was originally pitched as a way to offer "ant tribes" affordable housing within the city.

The ant tribe, whose name was coined by a professor studying the phenomenon, refers to graduates of local universities who live far outside the city in densely packed apartments. Its members bus to the city every day to work low-paying jobs.

Huang said he was inspired by Japan's capsule hotels. His capsules measure 2.4-by-2 meters and have no windows, sinks or toilets and rent for 200 to 250 yuan per month.

Hoping to woo tenants, Huang began offering free "live-in" trials last week.

Only Zhang Qi, a 25-year-old who works at an advertising firm, was willing to sign a lease.

Zhang has worked in Beijing for five years and earns 3,000 yuan per month. Though few would consider her "poor," she hopes to save more money to support her family.

The room is too narrow and is



Huang Rixin is still searching for a second tenant at his capsule hotel.

CFP Photo

bitterly cold, "but it's OK once you get used to it," she said. She previously shared an apartment with several friends and paid 800 yuan per month.

Zhang said she plans to live in the capsule for a year, or possibly until she gets married.

But many were scared off by the claustrophobic boxes.

"I didn't even live in it. One look was enough to make me feel depressed. It's like living in a jail," said Li Cheng, an office worker who earns 2,500 yuan per month. He said the cramped room made him feel hopeless and like he had been abandoned by the world.

Liu Yang, author of the best-selling *Unhappy China*, said capsule hotels happen in every society

where there is an extreme gap between the rich and poor.

Shenzhen also has "container hotels" and "tree hotels," its own response to the skyrocketing cost of city real estate.

Liu Dongwei, chief architect of China National Engineering Research Center for Human Settlements, said Huang's hotel is far below the standards of Japan's capsules.

"Japan's capsule hotels are very comfortable and have crucial luxuries like lighting, air conditioning and television," Liu said. "Huang's hotel isn't even attempting to meet the basic needs of its tenants."

Huang was quick to attribute the differences to his approach.

"I designed these apartments not to make money, but to solve the social dilemma of housing problem for new graduates," he said. Low-income workers cannot afford to rent even a single room, which is at least 600 yuan, he said.

Huang said his design will set a precedent, and that other municipal developers may begin redesigning to use space more efficiently. "Beijing is a city with a large population and not enough housing. I think the time is right for my ideas, and people will accept them. If nothing else, it may give the government another idea how it can solve the housing crisis faced by our floating population," he said.

Bureau gives bins in hopes residents will sort their trash

By Zhao Hongyi

The city management bureau is asking 600 residential communities to adopt classified-waste collection and disposal by sorting apart kitchen waste, recyclable and non-recyclable materials hoping the whole city can start sorting trash by next year.

To encourage sorting, the bureau is distributing free garbage cans and bags to households and bringing in experts and volunteers to explain how to sort waste.

Sixty new collection systems will be on trial at the communities, and they will continue throughout the year.

The capital produces 18,300 tons of waste each day, most of which ends up buried to the detriment of the environment.

"We'll take the waste and reuse it for heat and power generation," Chen Ling, deputy director of the bureau explained.

Chen said kitchen waste will be broken down into fertilizer.

The campaign is intended to



Wang Fengqing helps residents learn to sort their trash.

Photo by Man Yi

help Beijingers adopt a low-carbon lifestyle and ensure the improvements made to the city before the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008 are not lost.

The campaign began last October in Zaoyingbeili, a Chaoyang District community dominated by expats. The community has distributed 322,800 garbage bags and 1,100 garbage cans to the

2,800 households in 37 residential buildings.

"We stand by the community garbage bins to make sure people are sorting their waste before they toss it," said Wang Fengqing, a retiree. "If it hasn't been sorted, we open everything up and make them sort it there," she said.

The community has been having six retirees working the

bins in four-hour shifts since last October.

"Twenty years ago, we did not have nearly so much garbage," Wang said. "It was just kitchen waste."

Today, families are tossing old newspapers and magazines, broken home appliances, used up furniture and materials leftover after they redecorate.

"Beijing used to get rid of most of its trash using landfills and bio-degradation," Chen said. "But to solve today's problems we need to start classifying waste at the source."

The quantity of trash has been falling over the last year, Chen said. The city is currently upgrading and consolidating its nine landfills, but the municipal government will soon have to expand its efforts to more than 100 landfill sites.

As the city expands, many residents in new communities are facing problems with polluted air and foul odors from nearby landfills. Authorities hope to burn and break down the old waste as new methods are implemented.

Social site targets women who want casual love

By Annie Wei

The new social networking service 51taonan.com is trying to lure in users with a curiously feminist model: its male users are like products waiting to be checked off and dropped into the female users' carts for checkout.

Its slogan, "We are not looking for men but romance," could be a protest in this society infamous for abandoning women who are already past the traditional marriageable age.



Baihe.com, a leading match-making site, is hosting a campaign to let single women show off their charms for a hundred male judges.

CFP Photo

Dating for fun

Three months ago, 28-year-old artist Yi Yang set up a road-side exhibition to encourage single women to revel in their freedom until they find true love.

Her display came after a three year study by the rights group All-China Women's Federation. The group's survey of 2 million people over the age of 30 found that 41 percent of women were afraid of dying alone: only 8 percent of the male respondents shared their fears.

But dateless doesn't mean desparate: almost half the women proudly said they would not lower their standards just to find a man.

True love may be great, but more and more women are taking an interest in playing the dating scene.

For that they turn to social networks, websites that are making it easier than ever to hook up with someone like-minded for friendship or benefits.

51taonan.com, started in January, is branding itself as the first of these networking sites for feminists – China's first and only site to make the claim.

Male 'babes'

The site is like a fusion of Kaixin001.com and Shijijiayuan, Chinese clones of Facebook and match.com respectively.

But on this site, men and women are decidedly unequal.

Women users are the shoppers in the supermarket of men. Men cannot talk to women directly, only "ogle" them. When a woman user accepts a man's ogle, he can start communicating with her over private messages. He is only invited to chat once the woman adds him to her chart.

"It's not like the usual matchmaking websites. It's a social network, and it has been immensely popular with women born in the '80s and '90s," said Liao Yafei, marketing manager of 51taonan.com.

The site's mother company Chengdu Yongmeng Ruanjian Fazhan is a software developer specializing in dating services.

Like most Chinese web developers, the company shops abroad for its ideas, then hammers them into something to fit the local market.

The idea was inspired by a popular French website that made its male users into women's pets. After blending the idea with the taobao-led e-commerce phenom-

enon, 51taonan was born.

Liao said the site's feedback has been encouraging.

Many men, especially younger ones, have taken an interest in its theme.

"Men face a lot of pressure, especially in finding a way to pay the mortgage on a condo and buying a car. They can get too wrapped up in their careers to chase after girls," Liao said.

Tang Xiaoping, 24, and his colleague Zhao Honglei, 28, who both work for an education organization in Langfang, a city between Beijing and Tianjin, said they learned about the site through a friend.

"I don't mind acting like a product," said Tang, who been approached by several women in their 20s.

"I am not expecting something extra – I just want to make friends. I do not have a girlfriend yet anyway," he said.

Zhao said he is interested in new ways to meet women since work keeps him too busy.

"I think this website is better than other dating agencies," Zhao said. He said he has heard of other agencies that hired models to attract customers into their pay services.



CFP Photo



51taonan.com's logo gives many women a chuckle.

Competitive market

Liao said most of the site's users are women between the ages of 21 and 25. "I think younger Chinese women are less bound by traditional relationship roles and they want to be in control of their decisions."

The website has functions designed to make its female users feel "powerful." These include chatting, video and emails. While same-sex users cannot contact each other, they can share "products."

But many woman said they were not interested in this kind of dating site and said its feminist slant is just a sales trick.

"I'd still rather have a man initiate things," said Anna Lee, a 32-year-old financial analyst in Shanghai.

"51taonan.com is just a networking site with a clever angle that appeals to the media," said Amelia Wang, a 23 year-old public relations executive.

She said she feels more comfortable at Kaixin001 and Facebook where she knows the other users, Wang said.

Liao said 600,000 people have registered accounts at 51taonan.com in the last three months. The website has been featured in 37 national reports.

But that does not mean its business model is sound. "Our priority is still developing a stable number of users," she said. Right now, the site is small enough that it can be copied by anyone with money and labor.

According to AppLeap, a consultancy for social networks, the country has 124 million people using social networks, 34 percent of whom check their networks every day.

Research, an Internet consulting company, said domestic dating and matchmaking websites is an industry expected to be valued at 1.2 billion yuan this year.

With the success and popularity of Facebook and Kaixin001, more and more IT companies are attempting to start their own social networks. MySpace entered China in 2007, but it has since announced it will focus only on music.

360buy, a domestic site for business-to-consumer sales, is also trying to start a network.

Leading matchmaking websites like Baihe showed interest in the model, but its vice president Mu Yan said Baihe is aiming at serious relationships and did not yet want to open to casual meetings.

Kaixin001 quickly attracted many office workers through its VilleFarm, first opened in 2008.

Renren.com built another major social network by keeping students and alumni connected after graduation.

Yu Jun, product manager of Renren.com, said user loyalty is the biggest challenge.

AppLeap's report on the market in 2010 said easy applications and interesting games were the main things that attracted users. Word of mouth came second. However, users left quickly when the novelty out.

"If a Chinese social network can attract users like Facebook, it will be the next Tencent," Yu said.

Tencent is China's largest and most used Internet portal. Its Hong Kong market capitalization totaled HK \$302 billion (265 billion yuan) as of March 17.

What's next on the gaming console?

Craze over Happy Farmer shows the future of social networking games

Walk into any university library and you will find students procrastinating by playing games on social networking services (SNS). The most popular among them, Happy Farmer, has attracted 80 million netizens since its creation in 2008.

Why this popularity? *Newsweek* reporter Isaac Stone Fish gives this explanation: the game capitalizes on a deep and growing nostalgia for the agrarian way of life.

Affinity for tradition aside, Happy Farmer also shows the future of SNS games.



Some offices have blocked access to Kaixin001.com to prevent gaming on the job. IC Photo

Back to the land

The hottest Internet craze in the country right now is all about farming, a recent article in *Newsweek* said.

As 225 million rural residents have flocked to big cities for better jobs in the past 30 years, "social networking games like Happy Farmer have become a tangible reminder of the sense of community that many migrants believe has been lost," it said.

The game also reflects the urban middle class's concerns over the country's poor air and food quality, since it shows a "rural China that at least in the romantic image does not suffer from such problems."

The article concluded that though there are no statistics on the size of the game's spillover effect, "one thing is clear: China's peasants are migrating to the cities in search of a better life – while a growing urban middle class is looking back toward its roots."

Analysis

What's the next big thing for the games?

By Huang Daohen

Social networking games may currently be dominated by Renren.com and Kaixin001.com but other game developers are working to overturn the status quo by creating the next big thing in social media. Lee Rui, a game developer who started his own company two years ago, is on this mission.

As social gamers become savvier with their mobile devices, the future of games will have to go mobile, Lee said.

A survey by his company also found that young netizens prefer games that reinvent "classics" like card games, chess and checkers. "Old-school games will never lose their appeal," Lee said, "because there is no learning

curve as everybody knows how to play them."

Gamers also like role-playing games set in a historical period. The Three Kingdoms Period (220-280) is an all-time favorite as evidenced by numerous TV series and films about it, such as John Woo's *Red Cliff*.

"There should be more strategy games on the social networking platform that are based on China's long military history," Lee said.

And contrary to popular belief, "gaming applications do more than just kill time and allow idle young netizens to engage in escapist fantasies," Lee said, adding that players have a fondness for games that train the brain.

He said social games also provide a fresh approach to establishing new interpersonal relationships. "Site applications make a game simple, accessible and interactive. Gamers can play with their friends while also making new friends," he said.

But Lee said existing games are far from perfect. The games on Kaixin001.com, for example, are merely catering to baser instincts like stealing, taking advantage of people and reveling in boredom, he said.

"They are popular because you can use virtual cash and goods to do whatever you like, but soon you'll find that the accumulation of all these things means nothing, especially in the real world."

Opinion

Behaviors differ between SNS gamers in China and the West

If people, no matter where in the world they live, are drawn to the same kind of social networking games, doesn't it follow that they would exhibit identical gaming behaviors?

It turns out this is not the case, and the way social games build traffic and engagement in China is quite different from how they do so in the West.

Western social games are about friendship, cooperation, rainbows and cute puppies: I'll help you fertilize your crops and you give me the cow that was found wandering your farm. But what happens when the audience is younger, skews male and lives in megacities rather than suburbia? Apparently, they steal the virtual crops.

Before the Chinese government put a stop to it with an official decree, people were setting their alarms in the middle of the night to steal cabbages from each other's farms, bound by a clever game mechanic that rewarded regular play and penalized any player that neglected to log in for more than a few hours.

It turns out that Chinese gamers have developed a taste for competition much greater than their Western counterparts. As such, an outsider trying Chinese social games might marvel at one called Slave Manor that allows players to purchase other users to which they are connected and engage them in degrading tasks.

— Giordano Contestabile, senior director of PopCap Games

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Legal. Sort of.

Delayed launch of iPad spawns vibrant grey market

If you are an Apple fan outside the US, then buying the company's latest gadget, the iPad, is a distant dream. However, if you are in China, you will not need to dream for long.

Although the new device became officially available in the US on April 3, the gray market in China started selling iPads in advance, which are legitimate but informally imported to China.

One of many computer malls along the Zhongguancun area is selling iPad.



CFP Photos

Shipping iPad home

Jack Lee (pseudonym) is a gray-market iPad seller in China — or at least he hopes to be.

The New York-based postgraduate student's business model is simple: buy a 16G WiFi iPad in the US for \$499 (3,407 yuan) and ship it directly to his online customers in China, charging them 5,500 yuan for the privilege of having a gray-market model early.

Subtract around \$30 for shipping and another \$45 to cover NY-sales tax and this leaves Lee with a cool 1,890 yuan in his pocket.

While the 24-year-old Lee's idea may sound unique, he is actually far from alone in his venture. A review of popular online shopping website taobao.com reveals several hundred people are offering to flog Apple's new tablet for prices ranging from 3,500 to 6,200 yuan.

Lee's business is not exactly booming. To date he has had 10 inquiries from people asking for details on ordering an iPad but only one person has put down a deposit for the device.

"Faithful Apple fans in China want to take a bite out of the new apple as early as possible, and the market is coming," he said.

iPad made its debut in the US on April 3.

"It's still early, but the business should be profitable," he said.

Gray market

Lee is not a real gray market seller, but his simple business model explains how the gray market works.

In China, Apple has a tradition of delaying the launch of its latest product, from the iPod, to the iPhone and to the iPad, spurring complaints from domestic customers.

But that policy benefited another group of consumers — gray market sellers who make extra cash by purchasing products overseas and selling them to their counterparts at home.

The Chinese mainland and Hong Kong have vibrant gray markets, whereby consumers can buy par-

allel imports — shipments of legitimate goods not intended for that market — of most foreign products.

As long as customers are willing to pay, they can buy almost anything, from handbags to electronic devices, before the official launch date. Volumes on the mainland can be impressive with gray market sales amounting to several times that of the later official imports.

When iPhone parallel imports started selling in China in 2007 — two years before it became officially available — the most basic phone cost more than 8,900 yuan, more than double the then US retail price.

However, it seems to be a different story with the iPad. Apple has not said when it will officially make the device available in China but prices are already falling thanks to wide availability of parallel imports and weaker-than-expected demand.

In the capital's popular electronic product market mall in Zhongguancun, queues for the iPad are still long because each dealer can only provide about a dozen a day at present. Prices are expected to fall as soon as this weekend, however, when retailers expect big shipments of parallel imports to arrive.

While retailers are currently asking for 6,500 yuan for the 16GB model, its price is expected to drop to 4,950 yuan once supplies increase.

For those who want to pay even less, Shenzhen — a mecca for shoppers looking to pick up cheap copies of branded gadgets — provides plenty of alternatives.

Retailers in the southern city have been selling tablets that resemble — but are not identical to — iPads since August. Costing as little as 2,200 yuan, they are generally much thicker than the iPad and screen sizes vary from 7 to 10 inches.

In contrast to the iPad, most have internal hard drives and USB ports. However, their batteries run out more quickly than the iPad's advertised battery life. (Agencies)



The mainland has a thriving grey market.

Market watch

Mainland suppliers miss iPad component orders

By Huang Daohen

The iPads are selling in the US at \$499 (3,407 yuan) or more with the label "Assembled in China." But no companies from the Chinese mainland have managed to snatch an order to supply components used in the Apple's latest knockout tablet personal computer.

Last week, the list of the iPad component suppliers came under the spotlight.

The juicy order from Apple was carved up by leading information technology firms, according to a Bloomberg news citing people familiar with the matter.

International electronics giants including Samsung, Toshiba, Infineon and Broadcom are supplying the chips for the iPad. South Korea's LG and Austrian firm AT&S are delivering the touch screen and printed circuit boards, the report said.

At least six Taiwanese companies were chosen as suppliers by Apple. InfoAcer, Catcher Technology and Foxlink are contracted to provide the battery and USB ports. Hong Hai, Taiwan Semiconductor and ASE group will assemble the final product.

Due to the improved relationship between the Chinese mainland and Taiwan, some Tai-

wanese companies have set up production facilities in the Pearl River and Yangtze River deltas. "That's why the iPads in the US market have the tag 'Assembled in China.' Some assembly was done on the Chinese mainland," said Wen Yijun, an industrial analyst with Oriental Securities in Beijing.

For mainland electronics firms, Wen said the poor quality often associated with the Made in China tag may have led Apple to rule them out.

Compared to mainland companies, the Taiwanese companies have more experience as contract manufacturers, and Foxconn and ASUS are already Apple's original equipment manufacturers.

However, even though the suppliers won Apple contracts, they are still struggling to make money, Wen said. The 16GB, non-3G iPad retails in the US for \$499 but costs just \$260 to produce.

"That huge profit still goes to Apple," he said.

For mainland companies, the other way to make money from the iPad is by building software applications, Wen said. "This may well turn out to be the more profitable option given that the mainland Chinese market is too big for Apple to ignore."

US health insurer seeks to set up JV

The US health-benefits provider Wellpoint sought to set up a health insurance firm in China, *China Daily* reported Wednesday.

The company's president and CEO Angela Braly came to China for discussions with potential partners and the industry regulator, it reported.

"The joint venture partner should have the same vision as us but need not necessarily be an insurance company. We hope to offer health insurance services through the venture in 2011," it quoted Braly as saying.

China may become a huge market for foreign insurers as its health reforms continue. Private health insurance is increasingly becoming an important complement to government insurance programs.

DKV Deutsche Krankenversicherung AG, a Germany-based private health insurer, in 2004 took a 19.9-percent stake in PICC Health Insurance, the country's first health insurer.

South African health insurer Discovery Group purchased a 24.99 percent stake in a subsidiary of Ping'an Health Insurance last December.

Tencent buys into Russian net firm

Chinese Internet portal Tencent Holdings said it will acquire a 10.26 percent stake in Digital Sky Technologies (DST), a Russian Internet investment firm and Facebook shareholder.

Tencent, best known for its popular instant messaging and online game platforms, said it will pay \$300 million for the stake in Digital Sky, which bought into US social-networking website Facebook last year.

However, the type of shares purchased will give Tencent only 0.51 percent of Digital Sky's total voting power, according to a statement filed with the Hong Kong Stock Exchange late Monday.

Tencent said it will "develop a long-term strategic partnership with Digital Sky and the companies in which it has invested" and "explore further business cooperation with them."

In May 2009, Digital Sky bought \$200 million worth of Facebook's preferred stocks representing a 1.96 percent equity stake in the US firm. It also completed a tender offer to buy \$100 million of Facebook common stock in August.

"The investment allows us to benefit from the fast-growing Internet market in Russia, as well as to leverage our technical and operational know-how to strengthen the leadership position of DST," Tencent president Martin Lau said in a separate statement.

No gentleman?

Study says foreign women turned off by Chinese men



Chinese American comedian Joe Wong, a recent overnight sensation in the US, is particularly popular among his American female audiences. Is he gentle enough in the eyes of Western women?

By Wang Yu

Chinese women have cultivated an image of being talented, beautiful and sophisticated thanks to actresses like Zhang Ziyi and Gong Li. Men, however, have a lot of catching up to do. A recent study says foreign women regard Chinese men as "ungentlemanly" and "untidy."

The study, led by Dr. Zhang Jiehai of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, surveyed more than 100 Caucasian

women who live in Shanghai. Twenty of them further took part in an interview.

Most of the respondents said they see that Chinese men highly value family and are financially generous with their women, but they are turned off by the men's androcentric, or male-focused, view of life.

Other unappealing traits the respondents mentioned were ungentlemanly conduct, lack of confidence and untidiness; most unacceptable were keeping their fingernails long and spitting in public.

"We chose this subject because most Chinese people feel self-conscious in front of foreigners, especially those from the West – and pride is important to men. We wanted to see whether Western women sensed this or not," Zhang said, adding that his team's findings may help Chinese men build a more favorable image.

Comment

Different cultures make different men

Whatever Chinese society becomes, Confucian values will always remain. Among them, loyalty and piety are the most important, which doesn't say anything about respecting women or caring about what they think about men. Chinese men are expected to be broad-minded and to contribute to the development of his country. According to Confucianism, a man's moral character is much more important than his looks. Western women cannot understand this because of their cultural background.

– Cai Jingzhou,

sports company employee

Afraid of accomplished, strong women

I don't think Chinese men are more or less gentle than men from other countries. But I do think Chinese men do not like women who are rich, have a good job with a high salary, have an opinion and are physically strong. Compared with men of other nationalities, they want to feel that they are better than their women.

– Ines Brunn,
bike-shop owner

Chinese men are like other men

I'm a Canadian woman married to a Chinese man for 14 years. I like to joke that it has been 14 long years, but in fact, time has passed very quickly and happily. We have two children.

I think Chinese men are the same as any other man, for better or for worse. What the respondents complained about were not particularly Chinese traits. Perhaps in the West, some of these things are somewhat minimized by the Christian heritage such as, "Cleanliness is close to godliness." In Canada's past, teachers did not allow farm children – both boys and girls – to attend class if their nails were dirty. I do not know if Confucius conveyed a similar message.

Men are men. Androcentrism exists everywhere in the world.

– Terry Boyd Zhang, teacher

Chinese women are part of problem

I admit that Chinese men indeed have such weaknesses. The standards of Western women is something that has become universal; even the criteria for judging a man has become globalized. I think it is Chinese women who have made Chinese men what they are nowadays. They require men to be perfect: to take care of

the family, earn good money to spend on their women and to be gentle all the time. Women ask for too much and men have no room to move.

– He Yuxin, editor

The average man needs to improve

Most Chinese men feel self-conscious and lack confidence in front of foreign women. Those who do get into relationships with foreign women are usually artists, many of who sadly prove the stereotype of untidy, disrespectful Chinese men.

There are many Chinese men whose thinking is still very traditional and have a low regard for women. These men need to change and it will take time before they do.

– Xiangzi, charity shop owner

Shyness is the problem

Chinese men are very different from Chinese women. The women are more open to foreigners, while the men are much more shy. I think the men feel more comfortable in their own environment, whereas the women feel at ease exploring new things and doing things outside their comfort zone.

– Sahra Malik, founder of company coffee

Internet literature called 'garbage'

By Zhao Hongyi

"If I could, I would eliminate all Internet literature," the writer Mai Jia said during a seminar in Sichuan Province April 7. "The rise of the Internet is a sign that humanity is coming to an end."

Mai, best known for writing the novel *Feng Sheng* (The Message), said that 99.99 percent of writing on the Internet is "rubbish" and only 0.01 percent is worth reading.

The seminar, held in the provincial capital Chengdu, was the seventh in an annual event that discussed the many problems confronted by Chinese literature today.

Mai said he agreed that for the past two decades, the Internet has helped publicize the works of talented yet little-known writers.

Many of the seminar participants themselves benefited from the rise of the Internet, like Shao Jun, Baby Annie, Ning Caishen and Cullion Cai. They were able to find publishers only after their works became a hit online and are considered the "first generation of online writers." Despite the platform for their debuts, their works are still considered "pure literature."

This is not the case with the second generation. These writers who emerged between the years 2002 and 2005 produced works that were described by critics as "haphazard" and "ironic." Literature experts say their writings have no depth and have no roots in traditional literature. Writers in this group use pen names such as Tianxia Bachang and Dangnian Mingyue.

The third generation, those who began writing as 15- or 16-year-olds in 2005, are described as being driven chiefly by money. Many of them make a living through their blogs. Advertisers seek out those whose sites get the most number of hits and this has resulted in "big" but empty works containing millions of characters.

But the Internet has also liberalized the publishing industry.

"The Internet era has changed literature," Jin Bo, a publisher, said. "It broke the monopoly of professional writers, allowing ordinary people to create."

Comment

Han Han a successful example

Han Han is a symbol of Chinese writers in the Internet era. He has written many comments and analyses about our social problems on his blogs and tweets, which have become very popular and which have helped us fix society.

But writers also need to use pure and traditional literary styles to guide the development of society in this rapidly changing world. Only in this way can we produce great writers and great works.

– Huang Ping, holder of doctorate in Chinese literature, Fudan University

Readers should be No. 1

As a writer, you should care most about your readers – who they are, how many. Fortunately, the Internet provides us a way to know.

– Murong Xuecun, online writer

Live and let live

No matter whether they are writers of online literature or traditional literature, they face the same issue of producing value. It should not be a debate of who is better since they will have to co-exist for a long time.

– Chen Yongxin, executive chief editor, Harvest

We're the forgotten ones

We're experiencing the shortcomings of the Internet and have long been forgotten and marginalized by readers on the mainland.

– Zhang Ling, writer living in Canada

Winner of 'best job in the world' discusses realities of work



By Chu Meng

The 35-year-old Briton who was envied by everyone for winning the "best job in the world" – caretaker of Hamilton Island on Queensland, Australia's Great Barrier Reef – stopped by Beijing last week.

Ben Southall's visit was aimed to help tap China's growing overseas tourism market, said Andrew Parle, China regional director of Queensland Tourism, at a press conference last Saturday. When his one-year work contract ended December 31 last year, Southall was appointed by Queensland Tourism as "Best Job in the World Queensland Tourism Ambassador" for the next 18 months. It will involve him traveling extensively to extol the wonders of Queensland.

Despite having done hundreds of interviews with media all over the globe since bagging the job last year, Southall remained excited when discussing his life

on Hamilton.

"My favorite animal has to be the turtles which I saw from my balcony every day on Hamilton Island. They seemed to have such a wonderful life playing around in the water and I wish I could hold my breath for as long as they do," Southall said on the sidelines of the press conference.

"The turquoise blue of the ocean is a color I've always loved. And being surrounded by the water of the Coral Sea meant that I had it everywhere I looked. And 'amazing' was probably the word I and my girlfriend use the most while doing the 'best' job in the world," he said, clad in his trademark ocean-blue T-shirt.

His 22-year-old girlfriend, a fellow Brit, is probably one of the luckiest women in the world: she enjoyed the same exotic experiences as Southall without having to maintain his round-the-clock work schedule.

"I had to get up very early in the morning every single day and

take my camera to shoot whatever I saw in the ocean – schools of exotic fish, coral reefs, sunshine penetrating the surface of the water," Southall said. He also had to feed the island's turtles.

At night, he had to update his blog, write in his journal and take interviews. Late nights were very common.

Besides allowing him to live the fantasy of millions, Southall said the job has also given him a better understanding of the importance of the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest reef system. He said it is imperative that humans do everything to preserve it by living a more environmentally-friendly lifestyle.

Southall beat 35,000 competitors from around the world to promote tourism in Australia in exchange for a luxury villa on Hamilton Island.

His China tour will also take him to Shanghai, Taipei, Guangzhou and Shenzhen in the next two weeks.

Immigrant identity suffuses German director's work

By He Jianwei

The harsh life of Germany's immigrants is director Fatih Akin's favorite subject, stories told in six of his films screened at the Beijing Film Academy last week.

Born in Hamburg to Turkish immigrants in 1973, Akin has tried to define his identity through his art. Most of the characters in his films are social outcasts, like prostitutes and refugees. Even a German professor he portrays as an outsider.

"When you are born as a Turkish kid in Germany, you are born as an outsider and you are born as a minority. I have sympathy for every minority in the world who has been through oppression. Minorities everywhere have similar experiences," he says.

As a child, he and his family made a road trip from Hamburg to Istanbul, the capital of Turkey. The trip took almost four days. "When we arrived in Istanbul, I felt like I had traveled half-way around the globe and had landed in a completely different world," he says.

As a young adult, he went back to his parents' village in search of his grandfather. He says he was surprised to see his "face" in each of the children he encountered. "I saw my own behavior reflected in theirs. But I don't live there; I live so far away. I won't move there or stay there, but it is enough to find these similarities," he says.

The geography of his storytelling



Fatih Akin CFP Photo

always begins in the adopted land and ends in the motherland, reflecting his fascination with Turkey. His characters are equally drawn to the Eastern European country, particularly its cultural and political center, Istanbul. He says Hamburg will always be his home, but Istanbul is his muse.

"I ride my bike through Hamburg every day. I go shopping here. I go to the doctor. And yet I no longer have the eye for telling stories about this city, even though I love it. But in Turkey I have the feeling that I'm seeing everything with different eyes," he says.

He has been compared with German filmmaking great Rainer Werner Fassbinder (1945-1982) ever since Akin released his first work, *Short Sharp Shock*, in 1998. Critics said its main character Gabriel, who comes out of prison determined never to return to a life of crime, reminded them of Franz Bikerkopf in Fassbinder's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.

Akin denies his film's connection with *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. He says he had not even seen Fassbinder's work when he made *Short Sharp Shock*.

But it is undeniable that both directors' bodies of work are steeped in the theme of immigration.

In 1973, Fassbinder shot *Ali: Fear Eats the Soul*, the story of a love affair between a Moroccan immigrant and a German cleaning lady. The Turks in Germany at the time were called "foreign workers" and it was common to see newspaper headlines like, "The Turks Are Coming – Save Yourself If You Can."

"That was in July 1973. I was born one month later," Akin says.

Akin has won numerous international awards, including best screenplay at the Cannes Film Festival. The Turkish film industry has also recognized his accomplishments, considering him one of its own.

Akin's next plan is to do a story about European immigrants to the US in the early 20th century.

Ben Southall has been appointed tourism ambassador of Australia's Queensland State.

Photo provided by byecity.com

Airplane tragedy will not affect Poland's participation in Shanghai Expo

By Han Manman

Poland will not withdraw from the Shanghai Expo despite a domestic emergency following the plane crash last Saturday that killed the Polish president and 95 others, the Polish Embassy said.

"The Polish Pavilion has already been completed and most of the preparatory work is done," Adam Bralczyk, the embassy's press officer, said.

It is not clear however if any top officials will be able to attend the Expo's opening ceremony April 30 or the Polish Pavilion's National Day. "I think the original plans may be changed," Bralczyk said.

The embassy ended its four-day mourning for the crash victims Wednesday. Besides Polish citizens, Bralczyk said Chinese nationals and other expats also came to pay their last respects, with some leaving flowers at the embassy gates.

Polish Ambassador Tadeusz Chomicki issued a statement on the embassy's website Tuesday, conveying his gratitude to Chinese leaders and citizens for their expressions of support and friendship. Last Saturday



Many people came to pay their last respects to the victims during the four-day mourning held by the Polish Embassy in China.

Photo by Jessie Jia

morning, a Polish government plane carrying a delegation headed to Russia for the 70th anniversary of the Katyn massacre crashed in Smolensk, 18 kilometers from Katyn, where

sage from a colleague. He said he felt his mind "black out" upon hearing the shocking news.

The Russian deputy prime minister, Sergei Ivanov, said Tuesday that Russian investigators determined that there was no explosion or fire in the plane and that the engines were working normally. The investigators are pointing to human error as the cause of the tragedy.

The state funeral for Kaczynski will be held Sunday at the historic Wawel Castle in the city of Krakow.

All 96 people aboard the plane were killed, including President Lech Kaczynski and his wife Maria.

Bralczyk said he was at home with his child when he received the news through a short mes-

French technological institutes seek more Chinese students

By Zhang Dongya

An alliance of French institutes of technology recently announced it is extending a program that seeks to bring more Chinese students into France.

The program, run by the organization Assemblee de Directeurs des Instituts Universitaires de Technologie (ADIUT), was established in 2007, in hopes of attracting 500 Chinese students into French universities. ADIUT is composed of 116 institutes of technology in 87 universities.

Because of the impressive academic performance of the first batch of students, the French government last year decided to make it easier for Chinese nationals to study in the country.

"All Chinese students who get into technological universities will be exempted from a visa interview," Jean Marie Hornut, director of international relations of ADIUT, reiterated the policy during a media conference Monday.

"They are diligent and perform very well in university," Hornut said, referring to the 2007 group of Chinese students.

He said the number of Chinese students in French universities still has room to grow. "Foreign students make up 10 percent and one in 10 of them are Chinese," said Hornut, vice president of Nancy University, which enrolled five Chinese students in 2003 and

10 in 2004. They have now graduated and most are working for French firms in China.

French technological institutes emphasize training in the sciences, technology and commerce. Besides programs in chemistry, physics and biological engineering, they also offer ones in business and IT, including business management and administration, service and communication networks and information communication.

Some Chinese parents worry that these institutes offer training that is merely equal to junior college education in China. Hornut said that under the French educational system, the students can choose to pursue a master's degree or higher to supplement their basic two-year program, and records show that many have done so.

On top of high school graduates, the institutes also welcome university students who are dissatisfied with their program and want to shift to another area of concentration, or would like to experience studying in a foreign country.

Students who get accepted into French institutes are required to have French language training lessons: three months in China and another eight months in France.

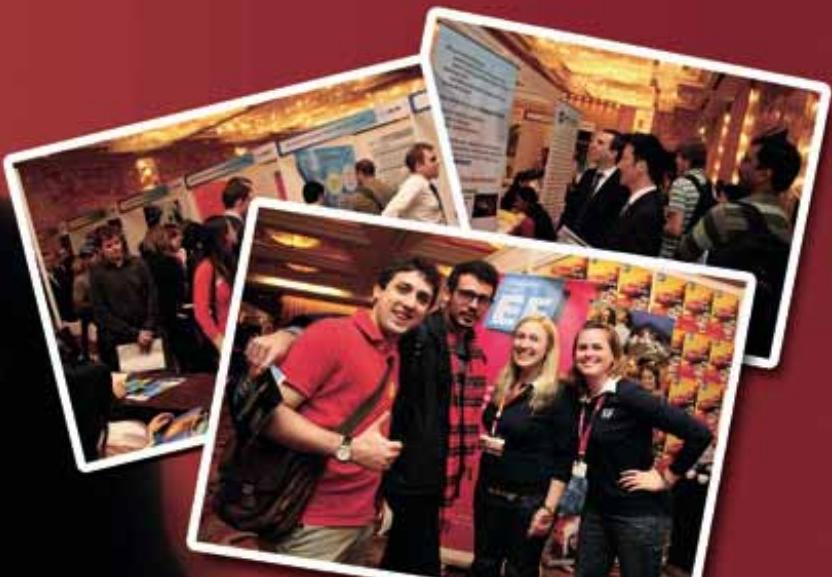
ADIUT is also planning to expand its foreign-student recruitment program into Asian countries like Thailand and Vietnam.

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French troupe stages new drama for charity



The Theater of Lanterns staged L'Atelier last year and raised 130,000 yuan for charity.

Photo provided by The Theater of Lanterns

By Zhang Dongya

The Theater of Lanterns staged *Forever Yours, Marie Lou* at Star Theater yesterday to raise money for abandoned children and orphans in the rural south.

Five of the French amateur troupe's 13 members acted in the drama, written in 1971 by Michel Tremblay, about the upheaval in his native Quebec in the 1960s. To stay as faithful as possible to reality, the play was performed in Quebec French.

"The most difficult thing was the actors' lines. Since the drama

was mainly propelled by dialogue, there were many lines for the actors to memorize," Isy Chautemps, the director, said, adding that the actors began rehearsing more than six months ago.

The play's reduced-price tickets for students were sold out soon after they went on sale. The show's Chinese subtitles were also created by student volunteers from Beijing Foreign Studies University.

The troupe credits this to a university lecture tour by Chautemps, a Frenchwoman who has

appeared in local TV dramas since coming to China in 2004. She joined the Theater of Lanterns in 2008 as its only professional member.

The troupe has presented four dramas since 2006 and has participated in the French community's Croisements Festival and the French Theater Festival since 2008.

Last year, the group staged *L'Atelier (The Workshop)* over four days and raised 130,000 yuan for The Children of Madaifu, a charity that supports orphans and aban-

doned children in rural parts of Hubei, Shaanxi and Gansu. This brings its total collection for charity at 460,000 yuan.

Chautemps said the troupe plans to "make every effort to continue" their charity work.

Forever yours, Marie Lou

Where: Star Theater, 64 Shouchao Hutong, Xuanwumen Nei Dajie, Xicheng District

When: April 15-17, 7:30 pm, April 18, 2:30 pm

Ticket: 40, 150 and 200 yuan
Tel: 13683069549
Web: theatredeslanternes.com

Event

Yoga teacher training

Ashtanga yoga pioneers Chuck Miller and Maty Ezraty will be in town for a nine-day workshop at Fine Yoga Club. The California-based teachers have been practicing and lecturing on yoga for a combined 50 years.

Where: Fine Yoga, 16/F, Blue Castle International Center, Tower 2, 3 Xi Dawang Lu, Chaoyang District

When: April 16-24, daily, 8 am - 2 pm

Tel: 8589 6474

Cost: 7,800 yuan

Women's social netball league

A women's social netball league starts Sunday at the Legend Garden Sports Center of Dulwich College Beijing (DCB). Participants will be assigned to teams or they can come in a team of seven to eight members. Those with no netball experience are welcome. Netball is a sport similar to basketball and mainly played by women.

Where: Dulwich College Beijing-Legend Garden Campus, 89 Shoudu Jicheng Lu, Shunyi District

When: Every Sunday starting April 18, 10 am - noon

Tel: 6454 9001

Cost: Free

AustCham Black and White masquerade ball

The annual charity masquerade ball organized by the Australian Chamber of Commerce in Beijing is happening tonight. Proceeds from the event will be donated over the next 12 months to 12 non-profit organizations in the fields of microfinance, environmental protection, community development and child care. Last year's ball attracted some 650 guests and raised more than 600,000 yuan for charity.

Where: China World Hotel Beijing, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 17, 6:30-11:30 pm

Tel: 6595 9252

Charity art auction by students

High school students at the International School of Beijing (ISB) are holding an online art auction April 17 to 30 featuring 200 works by Chinese and foreign artists. This will be followed by a silent auction at The Orchard on May 2. Proceeds will be donated to The Love and Hope Center and the Blue Sky Healing Home charity organizations. To view the art works and participate in the online auction, visit 32auctions.com.

Where: The Orchard, Hegezhuang Village, Cuigezhuang Township, Shunyi District

When: April 17-30 (online) and May 2, 11 am - 3 pm (The Orchard)

Tel: 6433 6270

(By Liang Meilan)

French sommelier school launches professional course in town

By Liang Meilan

Beijing wine lovers now have the opportunity to receive the French standard sommelier training and qualification assessment without leaving the city.

CAFA Formations Sommelier School, a Bordeaux-based wine and alcohol research institution, launched its first professional course in China at Hilton Beijing Wednesday evening. The nine-month course, which begins April 17, will be conducted by local and foreign wine experts.

"The comprehensive curriculum of about 500 hours includes basic knowledge of wine, wine theory, wine producing, wine tasting, wine matching, as well as sommelier skill," Wang Rui, administrative assistant at CAFA Beijing, said. "It is a combination of learning and practice that will make students understand wine intimately."

At the end of the term, students will undergo a three-step assessment to test their compe-

tence in wine tasting, wine theory and sommelier skills. Those who pass will receive a sommelier certificate.

"The highly regarded certificate will be a stepping-stone for graduates to find a job with a decent wage in restaurants or in wine trading," Wang said. "For extraordinary graduates with the required language skills, we will give them a recommendation to pursue a degree at CAFA's headquarters in France."

Wang said that in recent years, China has seen a boom in the wine market and the luxury hotel industry, ushering in a big demand for professional sommeliers. "Thinking that it was high time to introduce original, advanced instruction materials and senior professors from France, as how CAFA was founded," she said.

The school opened its local branch last July, initially providing short-term sommelier introduction and training



CAFA brings teachers from France to conduct professional courses in China.

Photo provided by CAFA

classes for wine enthusiasts who wanted to upgrade their knowledge and skill.

Since the courses – conducted in Chinese or with Chinese translation – begin at the basic level,

people with little or no knowledge of wine are welcome.

For more information about CAFA's short- and long-term courses, call 5820 8682 or visit chinacafa.com.

Natural Museum recruits foreign volunteers

By Chu Meng

To enhance its guest services, including foreign-language tours, the Beijing Museum of Natural History is recruiting foreign volunteers.

The museum is looking for native speakers of Arabic, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Russian and Spanish. The minimum requirement is that applicants be interested in serving the public, said Zheng Yu, the museum's public education project officer. Knowledge of zoology, botany, paleontology and anthropology are a welcome bonus, she said.

"Foreign volunteers will be assigned as tour guides, conductors of educational activities and campaigners for public education projects," she said.

Zheng said foreign-speaking project organizers and tour guides "are badly in need as more and more public educational projects are developed in cooperation with museums overseas."

One of these projects is "The Life of Darwin," an exhibition on the English scientist noted for his theory of evolution, done in collaboration with the American



Gao Yu, a volunteer, interacts with visitors to the Life of Darwin exhibit.

Photo by Gao Yuan

Museum of Natural History in New York City.

"From initial communication with the American museum to project planning, from organizing participants to conducting interactive activities, foreign volunteers are needed," Zheng said.

Gao Yuan, 21, a Beijing native who has been a museum volunteer for a year, said that the language barrier becomes a big problem whenever they have foreign visitors. "Many international schools participate in our public

education activities and many tourists want to learn more about the exhibits after they read the English labels. But few of us can speak a foreign language well," said Guo, who also worked as a volunteer during the Beijing Olympics.

Applicants should be at least 18 years old and need to commit to at least six hours of service per month. They should also have a basic knowledge of Chinese "to enable them to communicate with their Chinese supervisor and local volunteers," Zheng said.

How to apply:

Mail resume to: Public education office, Beijing Museum of Natural History, 126 Tianqiao South Street, Beijing 100050

Or email:
miaoyatou3@126.com
Application deadline:
May 31, 2010
Tel: 6702 0640
(Monday – Friday, office hours)

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiying@ynet.com

I'm interested in the "ground calligraphy" you usually see old folks doing in parks. Where can I buy the brush they use? I've seen some being sold by park vendors, but I don't trust their quality. Can you recommend a trustworthy yet inexpensive store in the Lido area?

There are many stationery stores around the China Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA), not far from Lido, which sell traditional painting materials. They also supply large brushes with sponge tips for ground writing. The brushes come in different stem lengths to suit the user's height. If you want a durable brush, pick one priced at around 200 yuan – but don't forget to haggle.

I'm planning to buy a car but first need to take driving lessons. Do you know any driving school that offers classes in English? What are the requirements to enroll?

Foreigners who want to take driving lessons in town need to present their passport, visa and residence permit to the school. If you work for an embassy in Beijing or have family who does, you are required to present the diplomat's ID issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and an employment certificate from the embassy.

Below are the only three driving schools in the city that holds classes in a foreign language.

Beijing Oriental Fashion Automobile Driving School

Beijing Fengshun Motor Vehicle Drivers' Training Center

Where: 168 Xiju Nanjie, Fengtai District
Tel: 6381 9435
Web: fengshun.cc

Beijing Shenghua Driving School

Where: Wangsiying Village, Chaoyang District
Tel: 5128 7826
Web:
shenghuajiaoxiao.org.cn

I'm looking for a job in the hotel and restaurant industry, which is what I studied in university, but it seems that only teaching positions are available to foreigners in Beijing. Do you have any tips to help with my job hunt?

Why don't you drop by the 2010 Job Fair for Foreigners at the Swissotel (2 Chaoyangmen Bei Dajie, Chaoyang District), which happens on April 17. It is organized by Chinajob, a job website sponsored by the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs. Call 6846 8025 for more information.

(By Liang Meilan)

All Expo products go on sale in the capital

By Chu Meng

More than 7,000 products bearing the image of Haibao, the Shanghai Expo's mascot, went on sale at the expo's official memorabilia store in Beijing last Saturday.

The store, located inside the Wangfujing Arts and Crafts Emporium, initially offered only 2,500 items when it opened February 9. Its merchandise now includes porcelain, jade artifacts, golden miniatures of the Chinese Pavilion, silver commemorative stamps, as well as hundreds of other precious metal items.

Meanwhile, 15 multinational retail chains, including Carrefour, Walmart, RT-Mart, Auchan Mart and HOLA Mart, have signed on as vendors of expo souvenirs. Together, these firms are operating more than 50 souvenir counters, selling small and medium-sized products like fashion accessories, toys and household articles.

Big items like models of bronze human figures from Sanxingdui, an archaeological site in northern Sichuan, traditional Chinese porcelain tea sets and books are only

available at the Wangfujing store, which attracted droves of shoppers last weekend. The most popular items were the stuffed toys of the blue-colored Haibao.

"Although precious-metal products like gold and silver commemorative coins and miniatures of the Chinese Pavilion make up the bulk of the profit, stuffed toys of the mascot are always the bestsellers, especially among foreign tourists," a store employee said.

According to the employee, a stuffed toy series named City Fashion Guy had become the star prod-



uct line. It consists of three items, all in fashionable clothes.

As many as 1,000 similar stores are operating in Shanghai, while more than 1,500 are scattered among the country's 30 other provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities, according to the operations office of the expo-licensed products. Even the Tibetan capital of Lhasa is host to two souvenir stores.

All the Shanghai Expo products are also available at the expo's online store on eshop-expo 2010.com.

National Tennis Center opens to public

By Zhao Hongyi

Starting today, tennis fans get a chance to play in the venue where Rafael Nadal won an Olympic gold in 2008.

The National Tennis Center, in the Olympic Green, was built especially for the Beijing Games and then underwent staggered renovation over the past two years.

It opened to the public for a few weeks after the Olympics, but was soon closed because of the then rainy season, according to Beijing Shi'a Forest Park Operation, the center's owner and operator.

The tennis venue, which has a lotus-like center court with bleachers that can accommodate 60,000, has been used for the China Open, an international tour-

nament established in 2004. Surrounding the main court are two smaller ones for semifinal and quarterfinal matches. On the west side are another 16 courts for the elimination round.

Today, the center opens six courts on the northeast, used for practices during the China Open by top players like Roger Federer and Venus Williams. The courts have excellent elasticity, skid resistance and lighting, the center's operators said.

"It's part of our efforts to enable residents to enjoy the Olympic facilities," Tang Tong, vice general manager of Beijing Shi'a Forest Park Operation, said.

Visitors can only enter through the center's east gate, but they

should have no problem with parking as there are 100 spaces available, Tang said.

Most of the venues built specifically for the Olympics, including the basketball gymnasium and the shooting range hall, have been turned into public pay-as-you-use sporting venues.

The National Aquatics Center, better known as the Water Cube, has opened its swimming pools to the public and held at least 100 performances, though it is currently closed for renovation.

Meanwhile, the National Stadium, or Bird's Nest, where the 2008 Olympics' opening and closing ceremonies were held, now regularly hosts cultural performances. Among the most memorable events

held there were Zhang Yimou's version of the opera *Tulandot* and the final soccer match in the Super Italian Cup between Lazio and Internazionale. In the winter between 2009 and 2010, the Nest held a season-long "Snow and Ice Carnival" that drew millions of tourists.

Workers' Stadium, where most of the Olympic soccer matches were held, has become the base of Guo'an, Beijing's professional soccer team.

National Tennis Center

Where: 1 Anding Lu, Anwai Xiaoguan, Chaoyang District
Open: 8 am – 10 pm
Cost: 100 yuan per hour (8 am – 5 pm), 150 yuan per hour (5-10 pm)
Tel: 8272 7087

Revival of ancient Kunqu Opera wins modern



Written 250 years ago, *Two Belles in Love* tells a story of two women lovers trying to marry the same man so they can stay together.

Photos provided by POLOARTS

By He Jianwei
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uty is beyond expression: so is Kunqu Opera. The 600-year-old form has haunted young

ices although few understand it.

In ancient stories, artists have been working to protect and promote the old artistic style. In well-known Taiwanese novelist Pai Hsien-Yung adapted *The Peony Pavilion* for Peking University helped rejuvenate the Kunqu tradition.

years later, Hong Kong film director Stanley Kwan has made a new version of *Two Belles in Love* created by playwright Li Yu over 300 years ago. Avant-garde designer Guo Pei, together with the or, made the costumes for the opera.

Belles in Love debuts next month on Beijing's stage and may usher in a new spring for t Opera.



His piercing eyes may be saddled with heavy bags, but 70-year-old maestro Wang Shiyu is still the top male lead in the world of Kunqu Opera.

"Kunqu lyrics are too beautiful. I'll never get tired of singing them," Wang says in his sonorous voice.

At 14 years old, Wang devoted his life to opera. On the stage he captured the beauty of Kunqu Opera in action and song. Last year, he performed in *The Peony Pavilion* in Zhejiang Province. It had been 20 years since he last took the stage, and fans flew in from foreign countries for the chance to see his performance.

He works off stage to revive Kunqu, an effort which found him working as the artistic director of Pai's *The Peony Pavilion* six years ago.

The play, written by the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) master of tragic romance Tang Xianzu, tells the story of Du Liniang, a young lady who dies of yearning for a scholar she met only once in a dream. Her ghost finds the scholar and shows him her love, and he restores her to life. After many twists and turns, the two are married.

The story fascinated the Taiwanese novelist Pai, but he wanted Wang to oversee the project to make sure the new *Peony Pavilion* adhered to tradition.

The play debuted at Peking University to great success: it performed to sold-out audiences as it toured the college circuit.

"I have never seen something as incredible as that packed Peking University hall," Wang says. "We brought in 1,600 people – that was a significant sign. If the young people don't come to watch, Kunqu Opera will die."

This year is also the 400th birth anniversary of Li Yu, a late Ming and early Qing Dynasty (1644-1911) playwright, actor, producer and director. The plays he wrote while traveling with his own troupe remain staples of the Kunqu stage.

To celebrate his birthday, Wang decided to reproduce Li's play *Two Belles in Love*, written 350 years ago. It tells a story of two women who are in love with each other trying to marry the same man so they can stay together.

Film directors and fashion designers are weighing in to give the old play a new look.

"Although the play depicts a same-sex love story, the playwright stays more focused on the depressive side of love in feudal society where male dominance was supreme. Women may have more rights in the modern era, but love between the two sexes is repressive sometimes," Kwan says.

Kwan, whose films often deal sympathetically with the plight of women and their struggles of the heart, is helping the actors to interpret their roles.

"It's a challenge for me to direct an opera because it's not my area of expertise. The singing has to accompany action, and Wang is in charge of that. My job is helping the actors grow into their roles," Kwan says.

Although it is his first time producing a Kunqu Opera, Kwan said it is fate. "I heard the opera when I was an unborn baby," he says. While pregnant, his mother frequently went to depict operas, like Cantonese Opera, Shaoxing Opera and Kunqu Opera.

Kwan says he loves Kunqu Opera although he does not understand it. "The melodies, the movement and the makeup attract me."

He agreed to direct when he heard Wang was on board as artistic director.

Kwan says one of his friends once saw Wang perform in Hong Kong and told him how Wang performed solo for 50 minutes with the audience glued to his every movement. "It seems impossible that the audience could have the patience to listen to one actor sing for so long, but Wang did it," Kwan says.

Although he does not come from a Kunqu tradition, Kwan has promoted other ancient art forms. He and his generation are serving as torchbearers, passing on the glorious arts.

In 1992, when he shot *Center Stage*, a biographic movie about silent film star Ruan Lingyu, he interviewed many old filmmakers.

"I learned a lot from them. Before I could start shooting, one of the old directors I talked to, Sun Yu, passed away. It left a deep impression on me about how much we can learn from our elders and pass on to the younger generation to keep the flame of art burning," he says.

The artists are using modern theater techniques to satisfy the visual expectations of today's audiences. Designer Guo Pei is making the costumes: "Strong visual appeal is part of the opera's beauty," she says.

Guo normally designs haute couture, but this time she is taking inspiration from traditional art. She spent a lot of time researching what materials are used for traditional Kunqu costume. A week ago, she visited Japan to watch Kabuki, a classical Japanese dance-drama. "Their costumes are flamboyant and represent each role's characteristics," she says.

On April 26, Guo will display her new costume designs at 798 Art District. "Only the actors know the differences between my works and the costumes they wore before. Although the fabrics are from Italy, Spain and Japan, they look very Chinese. It's like seeing traditional Chinese nature paintings – but done in oil," she says.

After the first round of shows, the play will be a permanent program at the Imperial Granary Theater. The Peony Pavilion was staged there 300 times.

Since 2005, Guo Pei has been creating the costumes for the play.

Protection of Kunqu Opera has come to be considered a national duty. Since 2005, 10 million yuan have been donated every year to preserve the art.

Capturing young viewers is a focus of the preservation project.

The government asks each of the country's seven Kunqu Opera theaters to stage 20 free performances at colleges every year.



Wang Shiyu, maestro of Kunqu Opera



Stanley Kwan, Hong Kong film director



Guo Pei, fashion designer

Two Belles in Love A Kunqu Opera

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 11-14, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6409 6477, 6409 6499

Armstrong, the god and buffoon, remembered

By Charles Zhu

The man who revolutionized music and popularized jazz is remembered in Terry Teachout's biography *Pops: A Life of Louis Armstrong*. Armstrong, or Satchmo (Satchel-mouth) is "the pure and the cheap, clown and creator, god and buffoon," without whom "you can't play nothing on trumpet," Miles Davis once said.

Armstrong was the first black man to enter the homes and hearts of millions of white Americans through musical recordings, concerts, movies, magazine interviews and radio and television appearances.

He was born into incredible poverty in 1901, in the black Storyville section of New Orleans. His 15-year-old mother was working as a prostitute and his father went missing right after his birth.

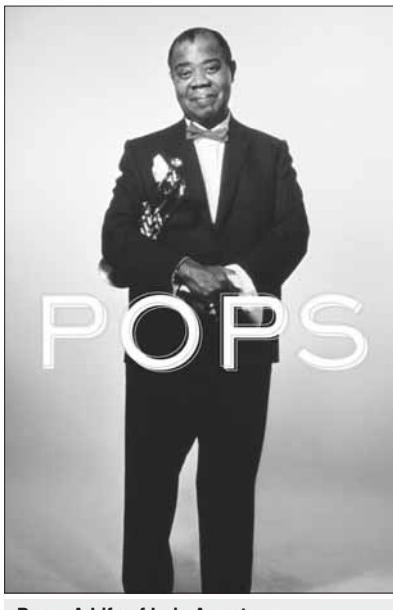
Armstrong defines the self-made man.

The musician's early life was enormously influenced by the Karnofskys, a local Jewish family of junk dealers who helped him to buy his first cornet. "If it wasn't for the nice Jewish people we would have starved many a time," Armstrong later wrote.

He discovered his talent for music at age 11 when he was sent to a "Colored Waifs' Home" for firing blanks from a pistol in public. The work suited him. He began playing the cornet bought with a \$5 loan from the Karnofskys and by 14 was beginning to entertain prostitutes in brothels. He helped merge ragtime into jazz and in 1919, he left New Orleans for Chicago where he joined Joe Oliver's Creole Jazz Band that made improvisation vogue.

By the late 1920s, Armstrong was one of the biggest celebrities in America with a series of landmark achievements, including being the first black man to star in a Hollywood film.

On his first tour of Britain in 1932, he was widely acclaimed as an innovator



Pops: A Life of Luis Armstrong
By Terry Teachout, 496pp, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, \$30

— "as modern as James Joyce" — and on the opposite side he was dismissed as a circus actor: "He looks and behaves like an untrained gorilla." Some lauded him as "more important than Picasso," while others objected to his film roles and funny-guy stage patter. "Now he is a one-man show: comedian, jester and lastly musician."

By the late 1950s, after four decades of remarkable success, Armstrong was still forced to sleep in a gymnasium while playing in segregated North Carolina and was denied access to a public lavatory in Connecticut. In Tennessee, dynamite was thrown at an auditorium where he and his

All Stars band were performing.

His biographer Teachout had access to a previously unavailable archive of taped conversations and writings to create the most complete picture of this well-known jazz musician. He understands well Armstrong's profound limitation as a black musician in an industry run by whites.

"Believe it — the White Folks did everything that's decent for me," Armstrong once wrote. Those comments earned him the label "sell-out" from black jazzers.

Armstrong also could not win understanding from younger fellow jazz musicians such as Dizzy Gillespie, the bebop trumpet ace, who called him "a plantation character," and he was reviled by James Baldwin, the leader of the "Negro intellectuals," in one of his stories as a purveyor of "old-time, down-home crap." He was charged as a collaborator in white racism — an Uncle Tom.

Even his admirers such as Billie Holiday said, "God bless Louis Armstrong, he Toms from the heart!"

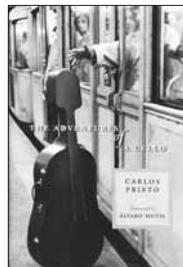
Teachout carefully documents Armstrong's wit, courage, kindness, loyalty and charm as well as his weaknesses: he had smoked marijuana almost daily for 40 years — "it makes you forget all the bad things that happen to a Negro." He also took a laxative called Swiss Kriss.

Armstrong lived service to his career manager Joe Glaser, a Chicago mobster who was able to get the gangsters off Armstrong's back. Teachout also retells his relations with his wives, none of whom bore him a child.

Teachout deems Armstrong "a child of his time, not ours." He says Armstrong was pretty much maligned. He had few illusions about American racism. He was a pragmatic believer in self-reliance — one completely out of step with the political correctness so deeply rooted in the culture of black America.

Bookworm book listing

Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers.



The Adventures of a Cello

By Carlos Prieto, 368pp, University of Texas Press, \$26.95

In the sparsely populated northern Queensland town of Desperation, loyalties run deep and battle lines are drawn between the powerful Phantom family, leaders of the Westend Pricklybush people, and Joseph Midnight's renegade Eastend mob. Steeped in myth and magical realism, Wright's hypnotic storytelling exposes the heartbreaking realities of aboriginal life.



Carpentaria

By Alexis Wright, 528pp, Atria, \$26.00

Antonio Stradivari crafted an exquisite work of art — a cello known as the Piatti — in 1720. Over the next three centuries of its life, the Piatti cello left its birthplace of Cremona, Italy, and resided in Spain, Ireland, England, Germany and the US.

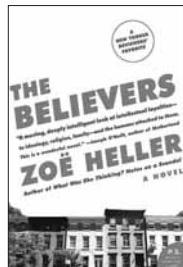


Playboy: A History of One Century's Attitudes Toward Sex

By Shi Yonggang and Bei Xiaorong, Shandong Pictorial Publishing House, 56 yuan

important issues. "It is also a book of images, although we had to remove a few that had models revealing too much," Shi said.

"We started the book out of curiosity, and in the process discovered how successful and influential it has been. It is the perfect balance of sex, commercials and ideas," he said.



The Believers

By Zoë Heller, 368pp, Harper Perennial, \$14.99

When a stroke fells radical New York lawyer Joel Litvinoff, a secret is revealed that forces Audrey, his wife, to re-examine everything she believed about their 40-year marriage. In the meantime, Litvinoff's children are struggling with their own dilemmas and doubts.

(By He Jianwei)

A magazine beyond sex

By He Jianwei

Playboy is a mystery to many Chinese readers. It is as much a magazine as a sex symbol.

But two Chinese journalists who studied the history of the magazine for two years believe it helped usher in a new era of openness in American culture.

Their book, *Playboy: A History of One Century's Attitude Toward Sex*, released in January, is the first Chinese-language text to discuss the magazine and its relationship with China.

"Once you know what Hugh Hefner, the founder of the magazine, wrote in its inaugural statement, and how many politicians, writers and artists have contributed to it, you will realize it is a serious magazine rather than cheap erotica," said Shi Yonggang, editor in chief of *Phoenix Weekly* and co-author of the book.

1953 was significant in the US. In January, the country elected Dwight D. Eisenhower to the presidency. Two months later, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin died. The Korean War ended in July.

It was in this year that Hefner founded *Playboy* magazine. Hefner's magazine was a response to

the new mood of the country. He felt that puritan ethics were eroding and the pursuit of pleasure and material gain was the way of life for many.

The Playboy philosophy was a welcome antidote to the repressive atmosphere of the 1950s. "If we are able to give the American male a few extra laughs and a little diversion from the anxieties of the Atomic Age, we'll feel we've justified our existence," Hefner wrote.

In the past 57 years, many modern writers have contributed their works to *Playboy*'s pages: Ernest Hemingway, Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, Jorge Luis Borges and John Updike. "Their works and ideas have influenced many Americans' lives," Shi said.

The authors also investigated Chinese connections with the magazine. Their research discovered that Wang Shuo was the first Chinese to write for the magazine.

Wang sent *Playboy* several paragraphs of his *Playing For Thrills*, but it was rejected for containing an incest plot. That was when Wang realized that the magazine was less open than he thought.

The book is only 150,000 characters but bursting with photos, including the covers of



Science rocks

Scientists flee the labs to entertain and educate

By Wang Yu

Scientists are one of China's most mysterious groups. The country's researchers and Ph.D. candidates usually remain sequestered in the lab, isolated from the outside world.

For a long time, that isolation has kept them cut off from the mainstream and ignorant of pop culture.

That all changed when Science Squirrels Club formed. For Ji Xiaohua, who founded the club in 2008, science never has to be mysterious or dull as long as it's connected with fresh ideas. Most club members are contributing writers to national media who synthesize science and pop in their articles.

The Squirrels organizes offline events like lectures and scientific movie premieres. In big cities like Beijing and Shanghai, pop science is on the verge of becoming a new lifestyle.



Ji Xiaohua is looking for more escaped lab rats to join his Science Squirrels Club.
Photo by Song Nannan

Becoming a squirrel

Marvin Peng is a Ph.D. candidate in biology at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. But he is better known as Marvin P, the science writer featured in magazines and newspapers.

Peng joined Science Squirrels two years ago when he was invited by a friend. Like other club members, he is familiar with pop culture and art in addition to his lab studies.

Every month, he writes three articles on comedic, theatrical and visual arts and cuisine from a scientist's viewpoint. Most articles are accompanied by his illustrations.

"I heard of the club before I became a member. It is a good idea – science should be fun, not an endless stream of boring theses," Peng says.

One of the club's goals is to disseminate interesting or entertaining science stories with popular appeal.

"The Phoenix Mars Lander needs eight minutes to take one scoop of frozen soil, and that has been a major headache for Houston. For people who don't study science, the robot's quirks may make for more compelling reading than any other recent developments," Peng says.

Peng cites his early influences as pop science articles and comics. Now distinguished in his field, he decided it was time to make his

own contribution.

But becoming a Squirrel is no easy task. The group is highly selective: all members must be extremely knowledgeable about their fields and excellent writers.

It was Peng's illustrations that caught Ji Shisan's attention. Peng was brought on as illustrator for the group's first book in 2008.

Calling for runaways

The first Sunday this month, Taiwanese biologist Wang Daohuan spoke on the mind and its future at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA). He was invited there by the Squirrels.

The venue was packed with crowds of young people – the ones who usually hang out at Nanluogu Xiang or MAO Livehouse.

Dr. Wang actually gave the same lecture at a traditional venue on Wangfujing that morning. Most of the people who went then were old colleagues. I found it very boring," Ji says.

"We want to see science in art venues. It makes our image less serious. It would be great if weekend trips to science lectures can become something popular," Ji says.

Ji is best known by his pen name Ji Shisan, which he began

using while writing a pop science column in 2004. He grew up in Zhejiang Province and received a Ph.D. in neurobiology at Fudan University in 2007. Since then, he has been writing 10 columns for a variety of magazines, including some fashion media.

Unlike most Ph.D. students who stay in school as researchers, Ji decided to pursue life as a freelance writer.

"I wrote a lot and the income was good. The reason I fled campus was because I didn't like the research environment. Science is great and cool when we are enjoying the comforts we get from new technology. But working in a lab sucks. Some people find that monotony comforting, but I wanted to do something more interesting with my life," Ji says.

Seven months later he moved to Beijing to start editing a website produced by Discovery. During those first few years, there were at most 10 writers doing the same thing as Ji.

His Science Squirrels Club got its start as a private blog. As the club grew popular, Ji and his co-founders decided to open it to the public.

The logo of the club is a squirrel eating a pinecone with its tail forming a question mark. The co-

founders view the pinecone as representative of science: delicious on the inside, but a hard nut to crack. Their job is cracking it open to let the public taste the best part.

"We call our members 'scientific runaways' – people who fled the labs to achieve in other ways," Ji says.

A bittersweet road

Science Squirrels Club rose to fame following the Sichuan earthquake in 2008. People were shocked by the disaster and rumors popped up quickly. The Squirrels were quick to engage and disprove most of the rumors, which brought them widespread attention.

Not all its writers were Ph.D.s – some were only freshmen – but all came from solid scientific backgrounds. The club has grown to include 100 members: students, teachers, professors and former journalists.

To most of the writers, the club is like a brand under which they can sell their words at a good price. A third of the writers live abroad and are more interested in name-building than money.

Domestic media now turns to Science Squirrels Club to fill its pages, and the government has noticed that trend. While many science education officials want to change how science is promoted,

their current inefficient system is a crippling problem. The club makes for an appealing partner.

"It's now a platform that brings together writers, media and government to make things work better," Ji says.

Even some traditional scientists are peeking out from behind their lab doors. A professor at Peking University recently started a column in a Shanghai newspaper.

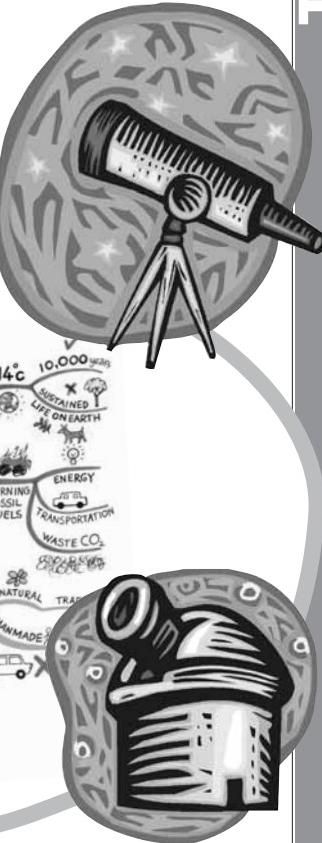
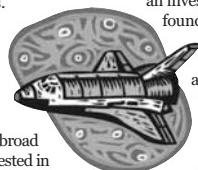
The audience is growing fast, and Ji himself has become a science idol: he was named one of *Esquire* magazine's top 10 people last year. Lectures are still free, but seats are limited. The club's current lineup of three books is extremely popular with primary school students.

But Ji says that success is just the beginning.

The Squirrels are thriving on an investment by Ji and his co-founders, and financial pressure is mounting. But the biggest problem is a shortage of squirrels: there is no money to hire more, and the volunteers are fleeing.

"It makes you desperate when you dream big but nobody around you can help. But Science Squirrels Club is a long-term project, and we are still on the right path," Ji says.

"After all, science is all about the possibilities."



Color the town with your summer accessories

By Gu Xiaomou

Though Beijing's cold weather appears never-ending, summer is really just around the corner and urban fashionistas need to prepare. This summer, the only mission is to be colorful, so we chose three new accessory collections that will banish far, far away the black-and-white world of winter.



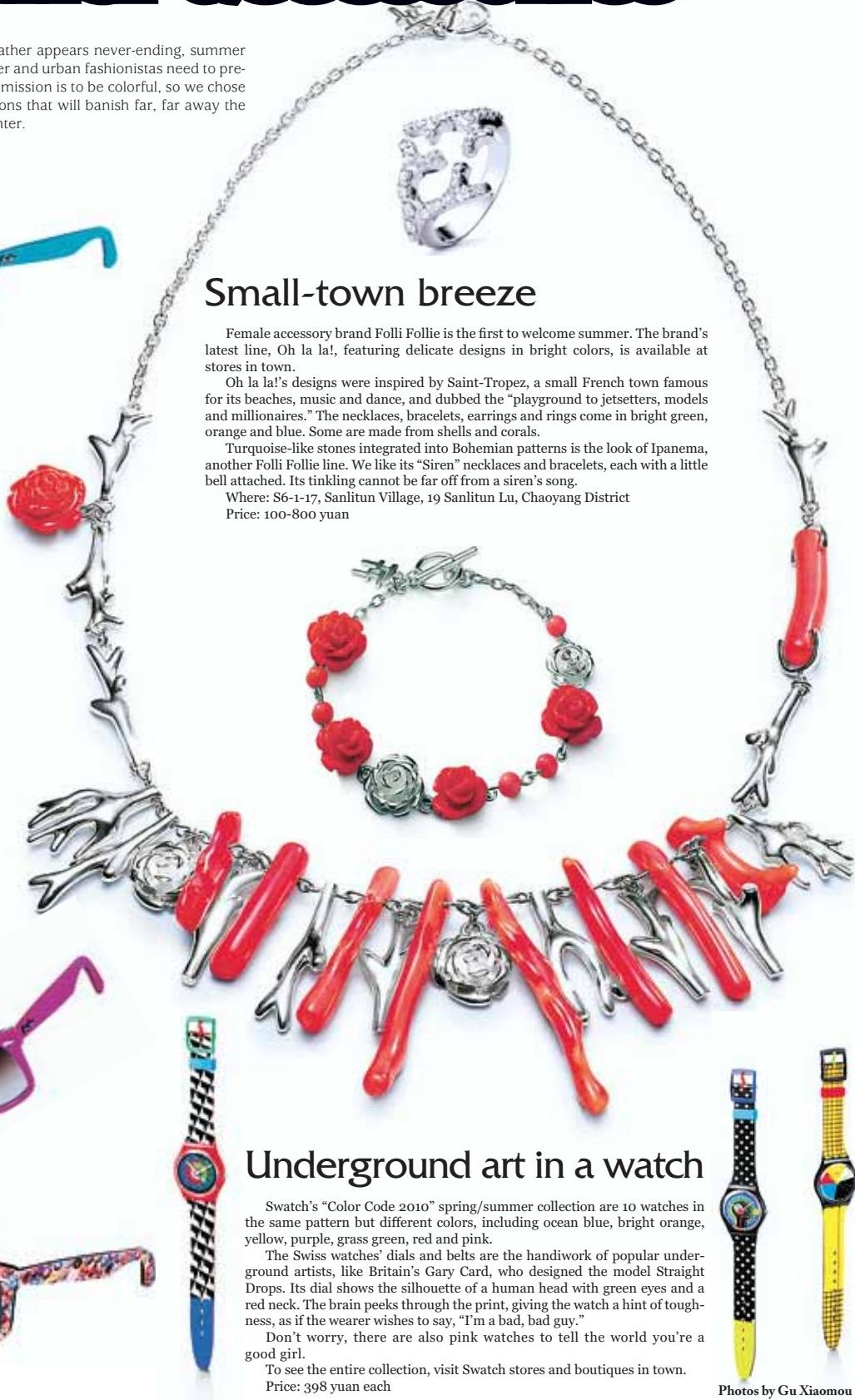
Uncle's sunglasses become young

Do not assume that everyone who wears Ray-Ban sunglasses is a boring, middle-aged uncle. The brand is showing a new side of itself this year: its spring/summer collection is all about "rejuvenation" through bright colors and hip designs.

For one series, the American brand invited world-famous graffiti artists to use the sunglasses' stems as their canvas. Others feature a map of New York City's subway and colorful stripes. Designs come in black, white, raspberry and dark green. Just be careful you don't spend more time watching your cool shades than watching the street.

It's time to celebrate the spirit of youth!

Where: All Lens Crafters stores in town
Price: 800-1,000 yuan



Underground art in a watch

Swatch's "Color Code 2010" spring/summer collection are 10 watches in the same pattern but different colors, including ocean blue, bright orange, yellow, purple, grass green, red and pink.

The Swiss watches' dials and belts are the handiwork of popular underground artists, like Britain's Gary Card, who designed the model Straight Drops. Its dial shows the silhouette of a human head with green eyes and a red neck. The brain peeks through the print, giving the watch a hint of toughness, as if the wearer wishes to say, "I'm a bad, bad guy."

Don't worry, there are also pink watches to tell the world you're a good girl.

To see the entire collection, visit Swatch stores and boutiques in town.
Price: 398 yuan each



Photos by Gu Xiaomou

Springtime means tea time!

By Annie Wei

Spring is a special season for Chinese-tea lovers. Two days before Tomb Sweeping Day, which fell on April 5 this year, farmers brought in the year's first harvest. Now it is the time to enjoy the fruits of the earth.

Beijing Today recommends a modern-decorated tea house popular among businesspeople, a restaurant specializing in tea dishes, plus two experts' tips for buying and storing tea.



Tea house of the 21st century

Lan Chayifang is a tea house that combines the old and the new. It is located on the fourth floor of Meilanfang Grand Theater, a Peking Opera house, but it has none of the antique decor associated with tea houses; it has a curved wall of floor-to-ceiling glass that allows sunlight to illuminate the room and gives customers a generous view of the street.

Its owner Mark Ma, one of the country's first IT professionals, opened the tea house because he wants to highlight traditional culture, particularly tea drinking.

"The Chinese definition of luxury does not only relate to superficial things," he says, referring to brand-name bags, watches and cars. "It's about one's lifestyle."

In today's hectic urban life, time is the most precious commodity, Ma says, and drinking tea can help people relax their mind and body. He says it teaches them patience: they have to wait for the water to boil, then for the tea to steep.

Lan offers teas that fall within the six most popular categories of Chinese tea. For spring indulgence, Ma recommends green teas like huangshan maofeng (68 yuan per glass, 280 yuan per pot), biluochun (88 yuan, 380 yuan), liu'an guapian (128 yuan, 580 yuan), taiping houkui (168 yuan, 680 yuan) and xihu longjing (198 yuan, 880 yuan per pot).

The technique used to process huangshan maofeng gives it a strong yet refreshing taste. It has a pleasant aroma reminiscent of fresh orchids.

Biluochun has compact leaves that turn yellow-green when brewed. It is harvested earlier than other green teas, giving it a subtler flavor with a gentle aroma. It is con-

sidered a gem by green tea lovers.

Liu'an guapian is a hearty green tea with a lightly floral aroma and a sweetish taste with a hint of smokiness. Taiping Houkui has a clean, refreshing taste and a light grassy aroma, while xihu longjing has a gentle aroma and a rich flavor.

Making a good cup of tea may sound simple, but it is not. Ma says tea not made the right way will not taste good. He suggests the following procedure: heat the teapot by filling it with boiled water; pour out the water then put in a teaspoon of tea leaves; pour in fresh boiled water and let the leaves steep for three to five minutes; lastly, pour the tea into a tea cup or mug, making sure to strain the leaves. Lan's staff will show customers how to do this step by step.

Tea goes well with snacks like melon seeds (18 yuan), dry nuts (38 yuan) and traditional Beijing goodies (around 28 yuan).

If you have room for more, Lan also serves a vegetarian set meal (38 yuan) that consists of vegetarian steak or sausage, pumpkin or potato, five steamed grains and broccoli.

Lan Chayifang

Where: 4/F, Meilanfang Grand Theater, 32 Ping'an Li Dajie, Xicheng District

Open: 10 am – 10 pm
Tel: 6625 6000 or 6625 6660
Web: lanen.net



Fried longjing with shrimp, 68 yuan
CFP Photo

Spring green tea longjing, taiping houkui and biluochun (from left to right)

CFP Photo

Master at cooking with tea

Many people think that tea cuisine is merely the result of cooking with a handful of tea leaves. The truth is more complicated: there are different techniques for different teas, resulting in a variety of flavors.

One restaurant that has perfected this art is Yunqi Chayan, located in a courtyard home with a softly lit ambience.

We recommend its bingcha yin'er luhui (12 yuan), a cold dish of tea, mushrooms and aloe. It has a sweet-and-sour flavor and the aroma of oranges. We also like the hongcha haixian chaofan (18

yuan), fried rice with black tea and seafood.

For meat dishes, there's chaxiang liuyi (68 yuan), bass steamed with tea leaves; xiaoji kuaipao (38 yuan), chicken feet with fried tea leaves; and shancha xiya (68 yuan), duck roasted with tea.

For dessert, try the liise danta, green tea egg tart, which costs 18 yuan for six pieces.

Yunqi Chayan

Where: 43 Mao'er Hutong, Di'anmen Dajie, Dongcheng District

Open: 10 am – midnight
Tel: 6400 2077

Experts talk tea with *Beijing Today*

Good for your health

Liu Qiuping, an expert with the Shanghai Tea Association, credits tea for keeping him in top shape at age 60. "I do not need a microphone even when I am giving a lecture to a class of 300, and I have no facial wrinkles," she says.

Li Shizhen, a famous doctor during the Ming Dynasty, says in a book that pu'er tea can help detoxify the body after a heavy meal of beef or lamb.

Although tea is good for the body, Liu says it is still not a beverage that can be drunk at random. Do not drink tea on an empty stomach or shortly before bedtime, she says.

Storing the leaves

To check the quality of green tea, Liu suggests pinching some leaves between the thumb and forefinger and seeing if you can

grind them finely. If you cannot, this means they contain more than the favorable amount of water.

Green teas can normally be stored for only seven days. To extend its shelf life, Liu suggests keeping the leaves in the refrigerator, inside an air-tight container. She says pu'er tea should never be stored in a tin can – the usual packaging for Chinese tea leaves.

Traditional drinking practices

Liu says there are two ways to drink tea. "When you are thirsty, you can gulp the tea. But when you want to appreciate the tea's flavor, you need to sip it," she says. "A small cup of tea should be good for three sips. On the first sip, feel the tea swish in your mouth; on the second, 'feel' its aroma glide all the way down to your stomach; and on the third sip, feel its sooth-

ing effect on the body."

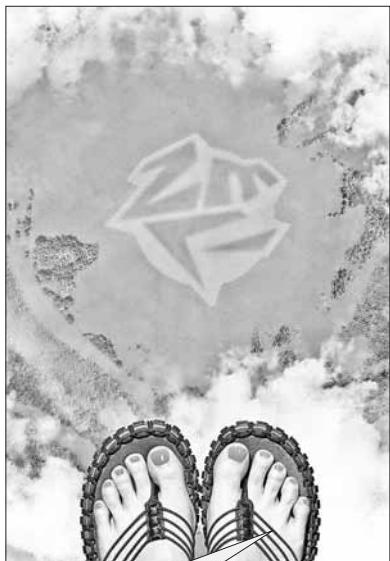
When serving guests tea, make sure you do not fill their cups to the brim as it is a sign of rudeness, Liu says.

Shopping for longjing tea

Longjing, or Dragon Well, tea is considered to be the finest green tea. It is available at almost every store on Maliandao, Beijing's tea street.

Tan Ren, a real-estate businessman and a long-time longjing fan, suggests buying tea not from the shops along the main street or stores with fancy decorations – because they usually charge more – but from more humble-looking stalls that sell wholesale.

Tan says his favorite longjing supplier is Xihu Longjing Zhuannmai (2/F, Maliandao Chacheng, 11 Maliandao, Xuanwu District, open 9 am to 6 pm), Tel. 13671241009.



Zebra Festival will rock Chengdu

By Wang Yu

After its successful debut last year, Zebra rock and pop festival returns to Chengdu during the May 1 to 3 Labor Day holiday. Last year's event broke the national record for concert attendance with 150,000 participants.

"Outdoor music festivals are for all music lovers, though I know it means much more to rock fans. The bottom line is we hope everyone finds something he or she wants to hear," says Li Dai, CEO of the festival's organizer, Beijing Zebra Cultural Communications Company.

Sichuanese pop singer Jason Zhang says "pop has as much a place in outdoor music events as rock."

The upcoming Zebra Festival features local as well as foreign artists.

Chang Chen-yue, a pop-rock singer from Taiwan who just ended his world tour, will be joined by Monkey Pilot and his own band Free 9 for the first day's finale. Pop band Sodagreen, also from Taiwan, will hit the stage on the last day.

The lineup of international performers includes two British rock bands. Does It Offend You, Yeah? will play the last set on the second day, while Exile Parade, described by British media as "possibly the next Oasis," will make an appearance on Day 3. It will be the group's first show on the mainland, but it has already gained a huge following in China thanks to the Internet.

Like last year, the festival supports causes like poverty alleviation, environmental protection and animal welfare. Part of its proceeds will go to NGOs such as C-Nature, Qiang Women Embroidery Aid Project and 1KG.org.

Beijingers who plan to participate are advised to book their tickets early, as well as their travel arrangements to Chengdu.

Zebra Festival

Where: Poly 198 Park, Chengdu, Sichuan Province
When: May 1-3, starts at 2 pm
Admission: 80 yuan for single-day tickets, 198 yuan for three-day tickets
Tel: 400-810-1887

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Saturday, April 17

Exhibition

Unending Distance

This is the gallery's third large-scale group exhibition of abstract art. It includes the works by 14 Chinese artists.

Where: PIFO New Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 28, daily except Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9562

Movie

Fais-moi Plaisir!

(Please, Please Me, 2009)

When an inventor admits to his girlfriend that he briefly met another woman named Elizabeth, his sweetheart is convinced that he must give into temptation.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 2/F Building 4, North section of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 3 pm

Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for

students

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8008

Railroad of Hope (2002)

The documentary, directed by Ning Ying, follows migrant farm workers for three years as they travel from Sichuan Province to Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Where: Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA), 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 1:30 pm

Admission: 15 yuan, 10 yuan for students

Tel: 8459 9269

Nightlife

Tokyo Princess Mademoiselle Yulia and Friends

Yulia is an icon in the Tokyo electronic scene for her disc-jockey-style performances.

Where: Star Live, 3/F Tango, 79 Heping Xi Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 10 pm

Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 120 yuan at the door

Tel: 6402 5080

Sunday, April 18

Exhibition

Half Flame, Half Brine

Photographer Yu Haibo presents 20 years of life in the fast-paced city of Shenzhen, including his fears and feelings of despair.

Where: MR Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 14, daily except

Monday, 10 am - 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9058

Nightlife

Mark Levine's Night of Country Music

The American musician is a professor at four Chinese universities and writes modern Chinese songs that integrate the melodies of country music.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6401 4611

Movie

HUNDSTAGE



Subway (1985) and Hundstage (Dog Days, 2001)

The first is a film by Frenchman Luc Besson, centering on a man hiding in the Paris metro after he is chased by the henchmen of a shady businessman from whom he has just stolen some documents. The latter is an Austrian film situated in a Viennese suburb one hot summer.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 1 pm

Admission: 30 yuan for two movies

Tel: 8229 6153

Upcoming

Nightlife

Gamma Ray

A heavy metal band from northern Germany performs in China for the first time.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: April 21, 8 pm

Admission: 160 yuan advance purchase, 220 yuan at the door, 390 yuan

VIP seats

Tel: 8403 7131 ext. 801

Stage in May

Concert

Charles Dutoit and the Philadelphia Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 4-5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 280-1,680 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Martin Stadtfeld and Festival Strings Lucerne

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 14, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-400 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Secret Garden Beijing Tour 2010

Where: Beijing Exhibition Theater, 135 Xizhimen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: May 29-30, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-1,580 yuan

Tel: 6590 3377

Dance

Don Quixote by the Bolshoi Theater

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: May 3-5, 7:30 pm
Admission: 280-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Akram Khan's Modern Dance Bahok

Where: Mei Lanfang Grand Theater, 32 Ping'anli Xi Dajie, Xicheng District

When: May 14-15, 7:30 pm
Admission: 80-580 yuan

Tel: 5833 1210

Drama

Sweet, Sweet Love

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: May 19-23, 7:30 pm
Admission: 180-680 yuan

Tel: 6551 8058

The Life Attitude of Two Dogs

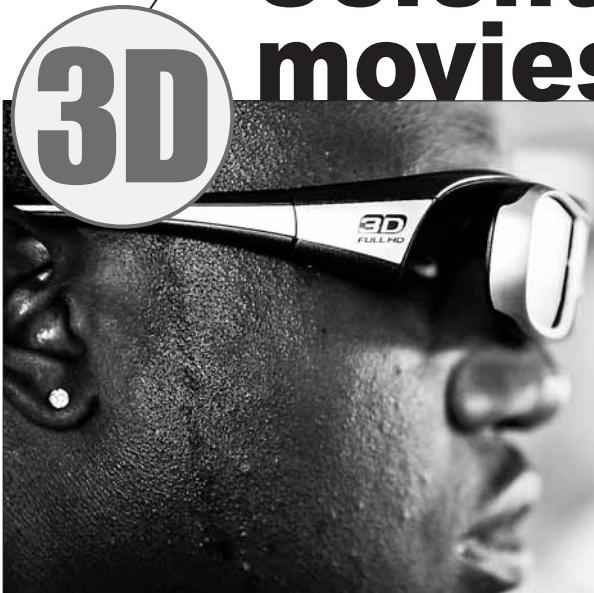
Where: Oriental Pioneer Theater, 8-2 Dongdan San-tiao Wangfujing, Dongcheng District

When: May 17 - June 13, 7:30 pm
Admission: 100 and 180 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

(By He Jianwei)

Scientists say movies hurt eyes



3D

By Chu Meng

3D fever has been sweeping theaters everywhere since Hollywood's box-office smash *Avatar*.

But scientists say *Avatar* and its ilk — like *How to Train Your Dragon*, *Alice in Wonderland* and the new *Clash of the Titans* — may be unsafe for viewers prone to migraines and vision problems.

The first conclusive link between 3D movies and eyestrain and headache was established in a study at the University of California Berkeley.

Scientists said 3D movies do not allow the eyes to "follow the rules" because viewers are forced to focus on things both far and near at the same time, causing headache and blurred vision.

"You're taking that normal relationship which has been coupled in the brain for years and you're changing it. And what we showed is that can cause fatigue," said Martin Banks, the professor who led the study.

In fact, 3D films could actually be damaging for young viewers who are more susceptible to their ill effects.

"When you hit your 50s and 60s, we think the concern is reduced. It is probably more problematic for young adults, teenagers and even kids," he said.

"Ten minutes after I sat down to watch the IMAX version of *Avatar*, I started feeling sick from the constantly changing focus. I had to sip on cold water to stop the room from spinning," said Wen Eryue, a 32-year-old office

worker who had LASIK surgery to correct his nearsightedness.

"I'm worried because everyone in Hollywood is jumping on the 3D bandwagon now that *Avatar* has hit it big," Wen said.

"Eyes that have been through corrective surgery have a more delicate cornea. Their vision can malfunction when faced with large, rapid visual changes," said Ren Ruojin, Wen's doctor at Beijing Tongren Hospital.

The cornea, the clear window at the front of the eye, accounts for up to 80 percent of the eye's focusing power. It is this part of the eye that is pared down in LASIK surgery to alleviate myopia.

Around 30 percent of LASIK patients experience side effects that cause halos of light or severe glare to be seen at night or under dim light. These problems are magnified when viewing a 3D movie, Ren said.

"For people who have had corrective eye surgery, the constant refocusing involved in watching a 3D movie can cause them to have headaches. Children may experience the same feelings because their eyes have not fully developed," she said.

However, alleged health-care experts writing anonymously on the Internet countered the study, saying that 3D movies may actually be good for people's eyes since it gives the eye muscles an extreme workout.

Scientists have yet to find any evidence to support this argument.

Natural ways to boost your bust

By Li Zhixin

Women who spend long hours in front of the computer every day may be putting themselves at risk of breast prolapse.

Jiang Guiyin, gynecologist at Beijing Guangren Hospital, said women office workers tend to hunch forward and crane their necks to look at the screen.

"Sitting that way for a long time will cause your breasts to sag, ache and become slightly swollen," she said.

The symptoms worsen when women lean forward, resting or pressing their breasts against the table. The pressure can interfere with circulation in the mammary glands if it continues longer than 30 minutes.

"The correct posture for working is to keep your chest straight, upright and 10 centimeters from the table," she said.

Upper body exercises can also be used to prevent breast sag and to achieve a rounder and fuller breast.

"Many do not realize that a simple exercise routine can mean the difference between small breasts and fuller breasts," said Teng Xiuxiang, gynecologist at Beijing Hospital of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

"Push-ups, finger locks, palm pushes, forearm grips and weight lifting can stimulate circulation around your breasts and increase

their overall size," Teng said.

These same exercises help to strengthen and firm the muscles and tissues associated with the breasts and chest area.

Breast augmentation is popular with women looking for a quick increase despite the dangers associated with surgical implants, but modest natural breast enlargement is possible with proper exercise and nutrition, Teng said.

"Natural breast enlargement is painless, safe, affordable, convenient and discreet. Natural breast enhancement is a solution for women who value their healthy bodies," she said. "Herbs are an important part of any natural breast enhancement program."

In recent years, medical professionals have found that the traditional herb red clover contains phytoestrogens and genistein, agents that can compliment breast growth.

Saw palmetto is also another effective herb for natural breast enhancement. It balances hormone levels, allowing a woman to achieve maximum growth in her breasts without having to pay for or endure cosmetic procedures.

Fenugreek is a known breast enlarger and contains diosgenin, which is used to make synthetic estrogen and has been shown to promote the growth of breast cells. Women can drink fenugreek

as a tea, use it in yogurt, applesauce or soups or make a light mixture with any lotion and massage it directly onto the breasts. It may increase libido in women as well as breast health.

"Breast enhancement may also be related to diet. For larger, fuller breasts that look healthy, you may want to consider your diet," Teng said.

A healthy body on the inside also means glowing, healthy skin on the outside. "Natural breast enhancement benefits from a healthy diet by tightening the skin tissue surrounding the breast, increasing firmness and lift," Teng said.

The diet with the most impact on the size of the breasts is one with organic, whole foods. Select foods that are cultivated organically to avoid pesticides, herbicides and similar products.

"Consume foods that are rich in amino acids and vitamins C and E like seafood, beef, pork, chicken, milk, soybeans, lettuce and cucumber," she said.

Drinking filtered, pure water is also recommended, particularly when taking herbal supplements as part of a natural breast enhancement program, she said.



CFP Photos



By Zhang Dongya

Yulan magnolia and winter jasmine bloomed this week, marking the start of spring. Other flowers will open their petals within the next two weeks. But Beijing's spring flowers bloom and wither as fast as spring in the capital comes and goes: some live for only a few days.

So, what are you waiting for? "Seize the spring," as a folk saying goes, and see nature's rainbow of colors on display.

Feast of flowers

Best places to enjoy the capital's spring blossoms



The Yuan Dynasty's Capital City Wall Ruins Park offers a grand view of Chinese flowering crabapples in May.

Temples and parks with yulan magnolia

Yulan magnolia, indigenous to central and eastern China, is the best-known flower species in Beijing. It can be seen in parks, public gardens, along the streets, as well as the city's many Buddhist temples, including Tanzhe and Dajue temples.

Most yulan magnolias are white, but Tanzhe Temple's two trees bear white and purple yulan magnolias. Locals call them the "Two Qiao Beauties," after two great beauties during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280).

Growing in front of Vairochana Hall, they were planted during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and are more than 360 years old. Tanzhe itself has been around for 1,700 years

and is one of the country's oldest Buddhist temples.

The yulan magnolia blossoms between early and mid April, thus its nickname "watching-spring flower." It lives for only 10 days, so Beijing marks the short period with a Yulan magnolia Festival, which this year began Tuesday.

There are also other flowers to see at Tanzhe Temple in the next two weeks, including lilacs and Chinese flowering crabapples.

At Dajue Temple's Siyitang yard is a yulan magnolia tree that is said to be 300 years old, planted by a Buddhist monk named Jialing who lived in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912). It is called one of the "Eight Miracles at Dajue Temple," like the temple's stone tablet



Fayuan Temple appears in many stories about historical figures viewing lilacs.

Photo by Shiguang

dating back to the Liao Dynasty (907-1125) and its 1,000-year-old ginkgo tree.

Dajue's visitors usually appreciate the sight of the flower while sipping a cup of spring tea. Within the yard is a tea house named Minghui, which sells tea grown in the south and processed by the temple's tea experts.

The Summer Palace is also home to yulan magnolias. They can be found in front of Leshou Hall, a dozen trees that envelope the vicinity with the flower's fragrance.

The Beijing International Sculpture Park is the place to go if you want to be overwhelmed by a vast tract of yulan magnolias. The park has 5,000 trees, including some that bear the rare purple and yellow flowers.

For a street-side view of the flower, check out Chang'an Avenue, where dozens of trees bloom near Zhongnanhai's Xinhua Gate.

Tanzhe Temple

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Pinguoyuan station, then transfer to Fast Bus 977 up to Fengcun stop and then Bus 931 to Tanzhesi

Admission: 55 yuan

Dajue Temple

Getting there: Take Subway Line 4 to Beigongmen station, then take Bus 346 to Bei'anhe stop

Admission: 20 yuan

Beijing International Sculpture Park

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Babaoshan station

Admission: 5 yuan

Summer Palace

Getting there: Take Subway Line 4 to Beigongmen station

Admission: 30 yuan

Xinhua Gate

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Tian'anmen Xi station, then head west

Admission: Free

Continued on page 21...



Purple yulan magnolia at the Beijing International Sculpture Park

Photo by Liu Jian



People visit Prince Gong's Mansion in late April and May to view its Chinese flowering crabapples.

CFP Photos



Peony blossom at Jietai Temple
Photo provided by Jietai Temple

... continued from page 20

Three temples for lilacs

The tiny, purple, white or pink lilac is another flower that can be found in many of Beijing's Buddhist temples. Three of the most popular are Jietai Temple, Fayuan Temple and the Temple of Heaven.

The 1,400-year old Jietai Temple has at least 1,000 lilac trees, 20 of which have been around for two centuries. The temple management considers the lilac its most precious flower.

A temple worker said their lilac trees are expected to blossom this weekend through the middle of May. Next month will be the peony's turn; Jietai grows the rare black and green varieties.

Fayuan Temple features in many stories about historical figures viewing lilacs. It is said that Ji Xiaolan, a scholar, and Gong Zizhen, a poet, who both lived in Qing had visited the temple and written poems about its lilacs.

Fayuan's lilacs include the purple and white native varieties as well as foreign ones reportedly brought from the Malukus Islands by Zheng He, a Ming-era voyager.

Temple of Heaven boasts the largest tract of lilacs in the city. The area, measuring 6,300 square meter, is located west of the Hall of Prayer for Good Harvests. A temple worker said the flower might not bloom until next weekend; right now apricot flowers are open.

Jietai Temple

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1

to Shijingshan station, then hop on Bus 385 to Dahuichuang Xizhan

Admission: 35 yuan

Fayuan Temple

Getting there: Take Subway Line 4 to Taoranting station

Admission: 5 yuan

Temple of Heaven

Getting there: Take Subway Line 5 to Tiantan Dongmen station

Admission: 15 yuan

Chinese flowering crabapples in parks and gardens

Yuan Dynasty's Capital City Wall Ruins Park has the largest collection of Chinese flowering crabapples: 2,500 trees in a dozen varieties. The park holds a festival to coincide with the flower's blooming in early April. The flowers have begun sprouting and will open for two weeks beginning some time next week.

Prince Gong's Mansion, built in Qing and the largest and best-preserved princely residence in the capital, features Chinese flowering crabapples. It is said that when Pu Ru, a Qing noble, occupied the mansion, he invited friends over to view the flowers each spring.

Yuan Dynasty's Capital City Wall Ruins Park

Getting there: Take Subway Line 10 to Beitucheng station

Admission: Free

Prince Gong's Mansion

Getting there: Take bus 13, 107, 118 or 701 to Beihai Beimen stop

Admission: 40 yuan



More places to view spring flowers Peach blossoms at Beijing Botanical Garden

The botanical garden is home to a multitude of plants, including yulan magnolias and peach blossoms that are now in bloom and tulips that are expected to say hello to visitors next weekend.

The garden has thousands of peach trees – about 70 species, including the ornamental peach, wide peach and chrysanthemum peach. The Peach Blossom Festival runs now until May 5.

Getting there: Take Subway Line 2 to Xizhimen station, then take Bus 634 to Beijing Botanical Garden

Admission: 10 yuan

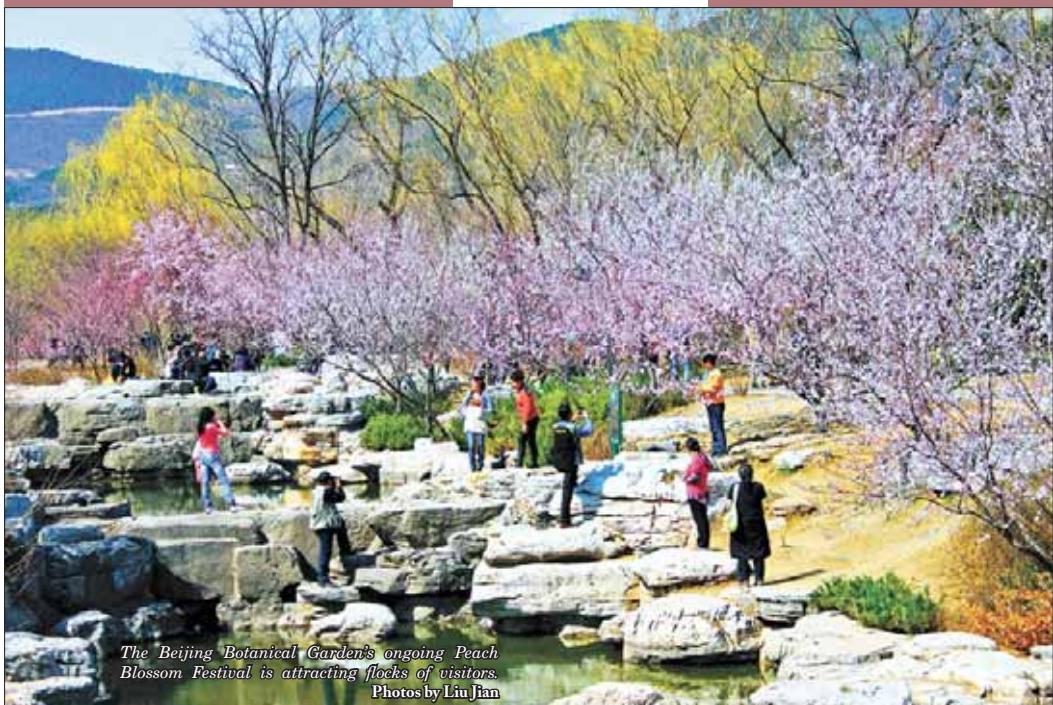
Cherry blossoms at Yuyuantan Park

Yuyuantan Park, which has 2,000 cherry trees of 20 species, hosted the opening of the Cherry Blossom Festival early this month. Some 10 percent of the trees were supposedly brought over from Japan in the 1970s.

Cherry blossoms wither after a week or two; they will likely be around only until next weekend.

Getting there: Take Subway Line 1 to Gongzhufen station, then transfer to Bus 836 to Bayihu stop

Admission: 10 yuan during the Cherry Blossom Festival



The Beijing Botanical Garden's ongoing Peach Blossom Festival is attracting flocks of visitors.
Photos by Liu Jian

Fitness

Oxygen Club

Oxygen Club is giving select guests a crack at the world's best fitness equipment. Swim in the spacious 25-meter indoor pool and relax in its saunas and steam rooms. Special classes in body combat, yoga, belly dance and weightlifting are offered on weekdays to ensure guests have invigorating options.

Where: Grand Millennium Beijing, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Cost: 18,000 yuan per person for individual membership (one adult); 26,000 yuan per card for family membership (two adults, two children); 15,000 yuan per person for corporate membership (four adults)

Tel: 15699718892 (Candice Liu)

Dining

Fresh asparagus is here

Delve into the flavor of fresh asparagus at French Bistro this May. Executive Chef Hans Gorsler highly recommends the Australian grass-fed veal chops with fresh asparagus and other fresh dishes from his asparagus menu.

Where: French Bistro, The Great Wall Sheraton Hotel Beijing, 10 Dong-sanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6590 5566 ext. 2219

Guest chef's creations

Don't miss this chance to discover the savoir-faire of Julien Machet, one-Michelin-Star chef of Le Farcon Restaurant, La Tania (French Alpes).

Where: Le Pre Lenotre, Sofitel Wanda Beijing, 93 Jianguo Lu, Chaoyang District

When: May 24-29

Cost: From 228 yuan (lunch menu); from 588 yuan (dinner menu); 288 yuan (cooking class)
Tel: 8599 6666



Institutional Investor names

China World Hotel Beijing's best

Readers of *Institutional Investor* voted China World Hotel Beijing the Best Hotel in Beijing, including it on the magazine's annual 100 World's Best Hotels list published in January. Hailed as one of the first three hotels in mainland China to be awarded a Platinum Five-Star rating by the China National Tourism Administration, China World Hotel Beijing was also named by *Travel + Leisure* as one of the world's best hotels.



Regent gets new executive assistant manager

Regent Beijing is pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Mangan as executive

Aviation

SilkAir starts new service to India

SilkAir, the regional wing of Singapore Airlines, will soon add two more cities in India to its route network. Subject to regulatory approvals, SilkAir will offer daily flights between Singapore and Bangalore, capital of Karnataka state, from May 17, and daily flights between Singapore and Chennai, capital of Tamil Nadu, from June 14. The flights will be serviced by SilkAir's Airbus A319 and A320 aircraft.

assistant manager of food and beverages. With more than 30 years' experience in hotel and restaurant operations, Michael brings with him a wealth of experience and skills in his new leadership position.

Yi House

Yi House is the first boutique hotel in 798 Art District, blending 798-inspired Bauhaus architecture, Chinese aesthetics and Western hospitality in a unique lifestyle destination. The ground floor has a reception area, lobby, bar and restaurant, and also an exhibit, on area for cutting-edge artwork.

Where: 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 6436 1818



Intimate dinner with the stars

The award-winning Hilton Beijing Wangfujing tempts visitors again with "Seven Courses * Six Maestros * Five Stars * One Night Only," a gathering of culinary giants set to take place May 10. From Germany to France and US to Japan, six world-renowned chefs will gather to create a one-night-only dining experience.

Beijing-Tianjin restaurant offers Michelin-Star cuisine

Marriott International Hotels is hosting Michelin-Star Chef Tam Sek Lun on his culinary tour of Beijing and Tianjin, where he will demonstrate award-winning dishes. The event will be held at Marriott International hotels in Beijing and Tianjin in April, when Tam will help the hotels' chefs to put his signature dishes on the menu. A cooking class will be held in Beijing where participants can meet with Tam to pick up tips on his home-style cooking.

Event

Punk X Beijing Zoo

Hailing from the music and club-culture hotbed of San Francisco, California, elmono has been rocking clubs, bars, boats, festivals, fashion shows and weddings since 1998. His skills on the turntables and passion for mixing music from hip-hop to house, dancehall to disco, rock to reggae, techno, electro, latin, funk, breaks and everything in between has taken him to the far corners of the globe. elmono has rocked the classiest clubs and dirtiest underground dives, sharing the limelight with famous musicians and disc jockeys.

Where: The Opposite House, Building 1, 11 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
When: May 15
Tel: 6410 5210

City's sexiest party

Bring your sexiest moves to the Pole Dancing Competition at Zeta Bar, the sexiest place in town, to win big prizes and great fun. This spring, Zeta Bar and Pussycat Dance studio are calling on the hottest girls to fight it out at Pole Domination and battle for a cash prize and the title of Beijing's Pole Dancing Queen. It will be a night of hot girls, sassy moves, seductive drinks and upbeat House music.

Where: Zeta Bar, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Chaoyang District
When: May 29, starts 10 pm
Cost: 99 yuan net per person with one drink from Zeta Bar's specials
Tel: 5865 5050 or 15001240809 (Anny An)

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.

She wears the pants at home

By Li Zhixin

I was stunned when Feng Ting, a former postgraduate classmate, tearfully confided that she has decided to get a divorce after only half a year of being married.

Bai Chuan, her husband and a schoolmate of ours, was a popular guy in school. He was vice chairman of the student union and organized many campus activities. I had always viewed him as independent and confident.

You could say it was love at first sight when Bai met Feng at an English speech contest during our freshman year. He chased after her for three years, and they married soon after graduation.

As his wife, Feng quickly discovered that Bai was not as independent as the world thought. "The dirty secret is that he is a mama's boy, always deferring to his mother's wishes like a lamb," she said.

Bai's mother wanted him to get a doctorate to boost the family name, so he quit his job at an IT firm and spent most days at home poring over books and writing papers.

The burden of supporting the couple shifted to Feng. "I had to take on a second job in the evening just to pay the housing loan and groceries," she said.

"I did not mind working while he went back to school, but the financial demands did not leave me much time to cook and clean the house. His mother, instead of being appreciative, always grumbled about how I'm not a good wife," she said.

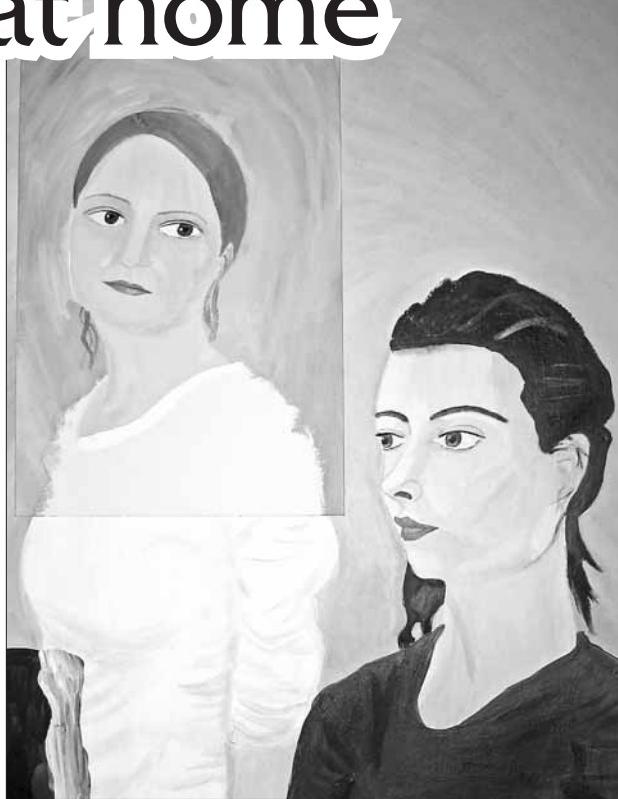
Bai suggested that his mother live with them until he got his degree so Feng would have some help around the house. Feng reluctantly agreed and soon found herself living a nightmare.

"His mother wears the pants at our house!" she burst out in English, for impact.

"Why don't you like her wearing pants in the house? Why is that a problem?" I said.

"What I meant was that his mother always has the final say in our family," Feng said. "She asked me not to invite friends over in the evening so we wouldn't disturb Feng while he studied. How infuriating! It's my house, not hers!"

But Feng said the most unbearable



thing was her mother-in-law's habit of interfering in quarrels between her and Bai.

"Last Thursday, I got so angry with my husband because he did not make special plans for my birthday, and his mother butted in, saying I was narrow-minded," Feng said, tears running down her face.

Feng told Bai's mother to hold her tongue. This infuriated the older woman and she stepped forward and slapped Feng. "My husband gave me a hard shove before I could do anything else," Feng said between sobs.

Bai later tried to make amends by taking her out, but his mother sabotaged

the plan. "He meant to take me to the suburbs for an outing, but his mother said he should stay home and study for an upcoming exam. I couldn't believe it, but Bai canceled the trip," Feng said.

"My heart feels so numb. I can't continue being married to a man who sides with his mother instead of his wife and who cannot stand up to his mother," she said.

I could almost hear her heart breaking and did not know what to say. I handed her more tissue and told her her friends would always be around to give her support.

"I've learned a huge lesson from this marriage," Feng said, speaking almost to herself. "A man who is dominated by his mother will not make a good husband."

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Take the child, fall into water carefully

By Tiffany Tan

The sign reminds me of a *TIME* magazine story published in March, saying the number of parent-child suicides in Hong Kong is on the rise. At least 15 cases have been reported since the start of 2008, including a mother who jumped off a bridge into the sea near the city's container port, taking her 7-year-old son with her.

The article says the main cause of the so-called filicide-suicides is financial hardship, aggravated by social isolation;

some of the mothers were immigrants abandoned by their local husbands and who wanted to spare their children a life of poverty. It is a sad reminder that nowadays, especially in urban areas, people are so caught up in their own needs and wants that they cannot see someone who is suffering right in front of them.

The Chinglish sign, meanwhile, reminds adults to take good care of their children while in the park. It says, "Hold on to your children closely. Be careful you do not fall into the water."

**Blacklist**

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

1. The electorate still seems unsure what he intends to do.

Professor Zhu Shida (ZS): At first glance, this sentence appears grammatically incorrect. How can the predicate "unsure" take an object? Your guess is partly right. Yes, the standard expression should be: He is fairly unsure of himself. Or, They are quite unsure of the results of the calculations. Obviously, the idiomatic phrase should be: "be unsure of." However, the adverb "of" can often be omitted without breaking the sentence. For instance, They were unsure (of) who was to blame. They were unsure whether it is right to ask her to deliver a speech at the ceremony. So, the sample sentence is perfectly right.

Native speaker Steven Sandor (SS): Newswriting has long emphasized lean and mean. Any words that can be dropped from a sentence more often or not are. This may result in some phrases that baffle non-native speakers who are anticipating longer, more drawn-out formal style. Another word that can often be omitted is "that," in sentences such as, She said that they're going to be late.

2. Google lends its power to perfect translations.

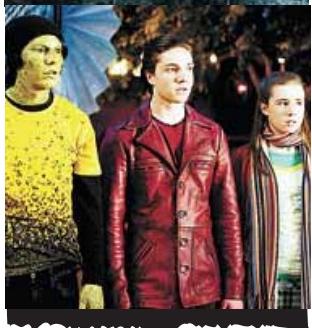
ZS: This is an erratic sentence. "To lend one's power to" is a set phrase meaning "give; add" that can only be followed by a noun or a noun clause. A becoming dress lends charm to a girl. He lends terrific power to his smashes. They are quick to lend aid to their quake-stricken countrymen. Or, They are quick to lend aid to building houses for their quake-stricken countrymen. It must be "lend aid to building," not "lend aid to build." We have another example here: The professor lends his influence to nominating her as the student with the best performance. Similarly, the sample sentence should be: Google lends its power to perfecting translations.

SS: Set phrases are often cliché. When you find that everyone is lending his power or helping hand, that's a good indicator it is time to find a new phrase. The phrase is also a little ambiguous as to whether Google is trying to perfect translations with its resources and technology, or whether it is just throwing money at a problem. I would suggest rewriting for clarity – this smacks of PR.

3. Smarts

ZS: We talked about the usage of "greats" as "great masters" in a previous column. Here is another example of an adjective becoming a noun in informal English. "Smart" as an adjective means "sharp and severe; keen; active; lively; clever; bright." We have: a smart student, a smart business, a smart blow and a smart reply. Here we have "smart" as a noun meaning intelligence, brains. The *New Yorker* recently printed this sentence: I knew I had the smarts – the business smarts – even then. In a newspaper, there was another example of "smarts" as a noun: He loves to show off his smarts; he is the sort to include a reference to the "Jupiter" Symphony without bothering to say who wrote it.

SS: Smart can also appear as a verb. Actually, the more common adjective and noun are both derived from the older verb form. The original meaning is to inflict pain – after all, pain can motivate one to smarten up. The intransitive verb is still used to mean causing another pain or distress: Getting punched in the face really smarts. Or from Webster, He would have to smart for this foolishness.



Movie of the week

It's easy these days to dismiss all films based on young adult novels as another cheap attempt by the studios to force a new franchise. Plenty of fine fantasy books have been failures at the box office: *The Seeker* and *Narnia* to name a few.

But *Cirque du Freak* stays dark: it does not compromise on its atmosphere to make something safe for tweens and younger viewers.

The villains, Mr. Tiny and Murlough – frightening and detestable to look at – are an essential part of that dark tone. There's also some adult-oriented language that rarely appears in these types of movies.

Synopsis

The story begins with the protagonist of the last adventure, Darren Shan, and his guardian Larten Crepsley moving in for a drink of blood from an ex-scout.

Darren is beginning to cope with life as a vampire's assistant though he still refuses to drink human blood and hates his companion, Crepsley, for turning him into a half vampire – something which forced him to fake his own death.

Although he is far stronger than any human and a shotput world champion, it is still hard to adjust to a new life.



Cirque du Freak: The vampire assistant (2009)

C: Megalomaniac! That man's a megalomaniac (5)!

Scene 3: At Crepsley's room

(Darren comes back to Crepsley's for an antidote.)

Larten Crepsley (C): So what have you come to steal from me this time? Thief!

Darren Shan (D): Nothing. Look, Octabite my best friend, Steve, and he's in the hospital, in a coma, because of me. And I was wondering if you had an antidote.

C: I do.

D: Thank you.

C: But I only have a couple doses left. Why should I waste any on some little psychopath?

D: Please, I'm begging you, okay? Look, I'm really sorry I stole Octa. I don't know what came over (6) me. I never steal things.

C: Why not?

D: Because it's wrong.

C: So then you've learnt a valuable moral lesson.

D: Yes, I have.

C: And you'll never do anything wrong again, as long as you live.

D: No, I won't.

C: You see? Now you're a thief and a liar. What did Mr. Tiny want?

D: Mr. Tiny?

C: The fat man in the limousine!

D: I don't know, something about souls and... And destiny. And he knew where I lived.

C: Looks like you're in deep shit, my larcenous friend. Mr. Tiny doesn't just take a random interest in people. And the people he does take an interest in wind up (7) dead or worse.

D: What's worse than dead?

C: Oh. Lots of things.

D: All right. I'll do it. I'll make you a bargain. You'll become my assistant. I'll turn you into a half vampire. And in return, I'll try and keep Mr. Tiny away from you. Oh, and I'll save your stupid friend Steve, despite the fact that he threatened to kill me.

D: You'll save Steve?

C: Why not?

D: If I became a half vampire, would I have to kill people?

C: Interested, huh? Vampires don't kill the people they feed on. Vampaneze do.

Scene 4: At Mr. Tall's cirque

(Crepsley tries to keep Darren at the cirque.)

Mr. Tall (T): Well, I was thinking about it. I mean, you're not gonna be able to do this forever, right?

Larten Crepsley (C): If you set everything up, so I can just fill it out.

T: Neutral. The Cirque has always remained neutral. That's how it has survived all these years.

C: You'll still be neutral. I'm not trying to drag you into anything. I'm trying to keep myself out of it.

T: And why exactly do you think Tiny wants this boy?

C: I'm not sure yet. But whenever Mr. Tiny wants something, I make it my policy to try and keep him from it.

T: That's a dangerous policy.



Vocabulary

1. be grounded: a punishment for children that bars them from leaving the house for recreation.

2. pick...off: to single out for killing

3. good riddance: glad to be rid of someone

4. top...off: to climax

5. megalomaniac: a pathological egoist

6. to not know what came over oneself: to be unsure of one's motivations

7. wind up: to become, usually for the worse

(By Huang Daohen)